

# The COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Vol. VII. No. 10.

Workers' Library Publishers,  
35 East 125th St., New York.

FIVE CENTS.

## CONTENTS

The Congress for Organising the Re- volutionary Class Struggle - - -	157
The New Chinese Revolution - - -	161
On the Question of National-Fascism in Germany - - -	167
Briand's Policy and French Hegemony in Europe - - - By A. De Vries	171
Maxtoniana - - -	176
The Revolutionary Trade Union Movement and the Problem of the Labour Aristocracy By G. Smolyansky	180
Report of Comrade Ercoli to the Italian Commission of the C.I. - - - - -	190

## THE CONGRESS FOR ORGANISING THE REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE

IN the middle of August there will be held, in the heart of the world revolution, in Moscow, the Soviet capital, the Fifth World Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions. The preceding Fourth World Congress of the R.I.L.U. was an important step towards the great tactical change which was required in order to raise the policy of the revolutionary workers' organisations in the third period of the post-war capitalist crisis to the level demanded by the conditions of the revolutionary struggle. The Fifth Congress is meeting at a time when the intensified world crisis of capitalism is developing, in a number of capitalist States, into a political crisis, and when revolutionary situations are developing in important colonial and semi-colonial countries. The technically perfected methods of squeezing out human sweat, the methods of capitalist rationalisation, were proved to be incapable of rescuing capitalism from its decay. On the contrary, a new intensification of the crisis set in on a world scale, accompanied by an extremely acute agrarian crisis which sharply accentuated all the problems of the decaying system of monopoly capitalism.

The workers on whom—thanks to the active support of the Amsterdam trade unions and social-democratic parties—the burdens of capitalist rationalisation were laid, are now being forced to pay again for the failure of capitalist rationalisation to overcome the crisis. The object of the capitalist offensive which is being launched on every front is to compensate for the



failure of rationalisation by the starvation of the working-class.

Mass unemployment, which had begun even before the American Stock Exchange crash gave the signal for the spread of the world crisis, has reached incredible heights in all capitalist countries. In England the figure was about one million on the fall of the Conservative Government ; to-day, with the Labour Government, it is over two millions. In the U.S.A. the figure of more than six millions unemployed indicates not merely the end of prosperity, but the dismal outlook for American national economy. In Germany the figure of unemployment is 3,200,000 and there is every probability that by the winter it will have grown to five millions. In Poland 60 per cent. of the workers are wholly or partly unemployed, while in the Danube and Balkan countries the percentage of unemployment is approaching the same dimensions. It can be stated, without any exaggeration, that the number of unemployed in capitalist countries has reached the twenty million marks. Capitalism cannot feed twenty millions of its slaves.

The capitalist offensive is being directed against the wages and conditions of the workers in the factories ; in the first six months of the current year the average wages of the German workers fell by 10 per cent. ; in 1929 the wages of the English miners fell by 19 per cent. as compared with 1924 ; wages in the heavy metal industry decreased by 5.2 per cent., while the productivity of labour in the same industry increased by 58 per cent. In 1929 the wages of 500,000 cotton operatives were reduced by 6.5 per cent., and in 1930 the woollen workers suffered a 9 per cent. reduction. In the U.S.A. wages, taken as an average for 40,000 business undertakings, have fallen by 18 per cent. since June, 1929, the fall in the automobile industry being from 20 to 40 per cent., and in State concerns 20 per cent. In France, Italy and Czecho-Slovakia the fall in wages has been just as great. In colonial and semi-colonial countries, where the imperialists use the full weight of the military machine to squeeze the utmost possible surplus profit out of the workers, wages have fallen to an even greater extent, while the intensity of labour has been increased until it nearly reaches the level obtaining in capitalist countries.

The nature of the crisis is such, and the crisis has reached such depths, that the direct pressure of capital in the factories has become insufficient to effect even the slightest amelioration of the crisis. In a number of capitalist countries the State finances have reached the borderland of acute danger. The social-political achievements won in the first period of the post-war crisis by the revolutionary pressure of the workers at a time when the bourgeoisie was extremely fearful of the proletarian revolution, are being rapidly abolished. Social insurance benefits, particularly unemployment benefit, must be considerably cut down, if higher taxation of the capitalists is to be avoided. The burden of taxation is getting heavier from day to day ; the new taxes, imposed with all the cunning of the bourgeois financial politics, will mean less food for the working-class ; the workers will be able to buy less meat, and butter will become a rare delicacy. In all countries heavy industry finds it necessary to form an alliance with the large landowners, the representatives of what is left of feudalism, to concentrate all the forces of the capitalist class, and new taxes on foodstuffs are imposed every week.

What is peculiar to the present situation is the fact that the capitalist offensive is being conducted not only in the factories, not only on one front, but on all fronts, while the State machine, already fascist or rapidly becoming so, is exercising pressure to a greater and greater extent. Millions of "small men" in town and village are being ruined and pauperised, are sinking into the ranks of the proletariat and helping to swell the numbers of the permanently unemployed. The standard of life of all the exploited and oppressed masses is falling rapidly as a result of the capitalist offensive, and the road which the capitalists are taking, in the hope that it will lead out of the crisis, is built on the broken bodies of the workers.

The greater the poverty the greater the suppression ; in all capitalist countries the State apparatus is becoming more and more fascist in character. The preparations for imperialist war—above all on the country of the proletariat—also require this fascist development, in order to ensure the peace of the graveyard in the *hinterland* of the imperialist armies. The Amsterdam trade union international at its



Stockholm Congress a few weeks ago worked out a complete programme for suppressing the class struggle, in order to facilitate the efforts of the international imperialist bourgeoisie to overcome the crisis. It is anxious to carry on with its work of strike breaking and at the Congress an international plan was drawn up for binding the workers hand and foot, so that they should not resist the operations of the capitalists; a few "left" phrases were used—their purpose being to serve as an anaesthetic while the operations are being carried out.

In spite of fascism, in spite of the social-fascist agents of the bourgeoisie within the ranks of the working-class, the revolutionary working-class movement has made great advances since the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U. The Fifth Congress has been preceded by a number of stormy and elemental movements against the capitalist offensive and the capitalist State. A hundred thousand French workers have risen in indignation against the reactionary legislation of the Tardieu Government; in Bradford and Mansfeld the workers fought heroic struggles against wage reductions; in India and China, in Cuba and Indo-China, the wave of the revolutionary working-class offensive is rising. The advance embraces both capitalist and colonial countries, and in this sense can be described as the advance of the revolutionary working-class movement on a world scale. The law of the unequal development of capitalism is verified in the inequality of this advance which varies both in character and in intensity. Beginning with a sharpening of the class struggle in the United States, profoundly shaken by the crisis, it proceeds through imperialist Germany, where the old bourgeois parties are already disintegrating and, as a result of the crisis, new groupings are being formed within the bourgeoisie, to India, where the crisis is leading to civil war, and to China, where the crisis has already taken the form of civil war—all varieties and forms of the development of the economic crisis into a political crisis, of the development of the working-class counter-offensive. What is, unfortunately, common to all these varied situations is that the extent and depth of the workers' counter-offensive far from corresponds to the extent and depth of the capitalist offensive, in spite of the fact that the character of the economic struggles—the wage and strike move-

ments, which are the most widespread forms of the working-class counter-offensive—has become radically different during this crisis. This is because the subject of the class struggle to-day is no longer concessions, no longer the crumbs which may fall from the capitalist table. We are concerned to-day with a general offensive of capitalism, of its fascist State machine and of the reformist trade union apparatus, the object of which is to lower the standard of life of the working-class involving, as this does, the suppression of the revolutionary attack on the rule of the bourgeoisie. This explains the acts of provocation, the bloodshed and the organised strike breaking carried out by the capitalists and the trade union bureaucrats in almost all industrial struggles. This explains the growth of class hatred and the desperate stand made by the workers in their struggles, in which, in recent times, greater and greater numbers of skilled workers, who have succeeded in breaking free from the influence of the social-fascist trade union and party bureaucracy, have taken part.

The revolutionary trade union movement did not fully succeed in mastering the tasks which have confronted it since the time of the Fourth Congress; it has not yet become the effective organiser of the working-class counter-offensive, it has not succeeded, to the extent required by objective conditions, in giving a political character to economic struggles, and in extending the working-class front to the degree required by the extent of the capitalist offensive. Nevertheless, the Fifth R.I.L.U. Congress can point to a number of not inconsiderable achievements. Since the Fourth Congress the revolutionary trade union organisations in Germany, France, Poland, China and India have made important steps forward in the independent leadership of the workers' economic struggles. To a large extent the opportunist fear of strike movements has been overcome; they were able to assume leadership of a number of important strikes and maintain it to the end; the trade union opposition and the red trade unions at last realised the importance of the unorganised masses, and large numbers of these unorganised workers were drawn into the united working-class front. By fighting right wing opportunism and left sectarianism in their own ranks, and, in particular, by overcoming trade union legalism,



they have learnt how to fight against the social-fascist trade union apparatus.

But all this was only a beginning, when taken in relation to what still remains to be done, and what must be done, in the way of organising and developing the counter-offensive of the working-class against capitalism. The adoption of a defensive attitude, the passive waiting for spontaneous elemental movements, the neglect of organisational preparations for economic struggles, the opportunist fear of the social-fascist bureaucracy which has control of trade union funds and is supported by the fascist State machine—all these factors still exist as obstacles preventing the revolutionary trade union movement from carrying out its tasks, which are intensified by the world economic crisis, by its development into a political crisis, by the spontaneous mass movements of the workers and their efforts not only to resist the capitalist offensive, but to conduct a counter-offensive.

The opportunity for the application in the factories of the tactics of the united front from below, which is provided by these circumstances, was far from being fully utilised in order to extend the mobilisation of the masses. On the one hand opportunist slowness, and on the other hand sectarian hurry, have prevented the correct application on a wide scale of the united front tactics. The traditions of trade unionism, the reformism of Brandler, Hais and Co., the traditions of syndicalist narrowness maintained by Morratti and others, still live in the leadership of the revolutionary trade union movement. Petty bourgeois influence on the working-class gives rise to a left sectarian attitude which limits the sphere of influence exercised by the revolutionary trade union organisations. This has happened even in Germany, the country with the greatest and strongest revolutionary working-class movement. Right wing opportunism was particularly harmful in its effects, leading not only to defeat in a number of struggles, but also to a decline in the recruiting power of the revolutionary organisations such as the C.G.T.U in France, and the red trade unions in Czechoslovakia, whose membership has fallen. This is no less true of those countries where the adherents of the R.I.L.U. work as an organised opposition within the reformist unions.

On the other hand, since the Fourth Congress, the R.I.L.U. has succeeded in winning and

organising masses of workers in a number of countries (Latin-America, India, Indo-China, Africa, etc.), and in improving the organisational standard of the revolutionary trade union opposition (Germany). This has been accomplished in the course of bitter struggles against the fascist State machine and the social-fascist trade union bureaucracy. The persecution of revolutionary trade union organisations and their members has never been so great (in Yugoslavia, Rumania, etc.) as between the Fourth and Fifth Congresses, and the events taking place in Finland and Germany show that this persecution will continue and grow.

In such a situation, it is still more painful to realise that the revolutionary trade union organisations have not made that progress in organising mass struggle which was laid down by the Fourth R.I.L.U. Congress as their immediate task. In their work, the revolutionary trade union oppositions still move in a cloud of generalities, and have failed to transform, by persistent and detailed revolutionary work, the elementary and daily demands of the working-class into the starting point for extending and deepening the class struggle. Mass unemployment has been utilised for extending mass struggles only to an inadequate extent, just as the factory work of trade union organisations has been wholly insufficient. In many cases revolutionary phrases have replaced daily revolutionary mass work. Right wing opportunism and left wing sectarianism have meant that revolutionary words have not been translated into revolutionary activity, that the methods of agitation and propaganda have been used at the expense of revolutionary organisational work.

Taken as a whole, it must be admitted that the revolutionary trade union movement has not been able to keep pace with the growth and the accentuation of the economic and political crisis, it has lagged behind, and has often failed to march at the head of mass movements, of industrial struggles.

Revolutionary self-criticism, which will be the guiding thread throughout the proceedings of the Fifth R.I.L.U. Congress, indicates the two most important general tasks of that Congress.

The revolutionary trade union organisations must be prepared to catch up with the progress of the economic and political crisis in order,



secondly, to attain the leadership of the elemental mass movements by organising the working-class offensive against the offensive of capitalism.

The entire revolutionary working-class expects

this Congress to organise the revolutionary class struggle along the lines of developing all the forces of the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalism and the conquest of its class dictatorship.

## THE NEW CHINESE REVOLUTION

### I.

**S**UDDENLY and almost unexpectedly a numerous Red army has risen up from the midst of the jungle of Chinese reaction and attracted widespread attention. Efforts to silence this new revolutionary movement seem absurd and doomed to failure. Renewed attempts at intervention are being made by British, Japanese, French and American imperialists, who are endeavouring to shoot down the nascent forces of the new Chinese revolution. The international press is clamouring in protest against the "horrors" of the peasantry movement in China, the red terror of the partisans and the "atrocities" committed in the Soviet districts. Powerless in their attempts to crush the rising wave of revolution they are using their old time-worn method of representing their nefarious activities as acts "in defence of justice and civilisation." Again there is the cry that Bolshevik agents have overrun China! Again in every corner and alley they see "the hand of Moscow"! Once again it is a question "of saving the elementary foundations of human society."

The imperialists are trying in vain to drown the voice of the workers and peasants in China by the thunder of their artillery and the hysterical yelping of their press. The Chinese workers and peasants have broken loose and are flinging their millions into the struggle against imperialism and the counter-revolutionary activities of the bourgeois landlords.

The hangers-on of imperialism in China already declare with horror that this outbreak on the part of the peasantry is a "repetition of the Taipinsk (?) revolution" on extensive Bolshevik lines. And the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, benefitting apparently by the observations of the German battalions in the ranks of Chang-Kai Chek's armies, describes with despair the strength of the supporters of the peasant-par-

tisan armies which have seized more than a dozen Chinese provinces, comprising practically the entire centre and south of China. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* writes:—

"During the past few days a most serious and dangerous situation has arisen in two provinces, Hunan and Tsantsi, where the radical peasantry have established a régime of force and actually taken complete control of the capital of Hunan. In the ranks of the Chinese peasantry, forces consisting of the dregs of the populace are at work and no mercy should be shown in dealing with such elements. The general struggle may be decided in one way or another on the battlefield, but not so that of the peasantry, who have risen up against the very basis of what constituted life for the Chinese people."

"The control of the land is concentrated in the hands of the few," the bourgeois press points out as though to strengthen their fears. It is no mere chance that the new revolution in China should have arisen in the ranks of the peasantry and under the slogan of the agrarian revolution is developing into an organised struggle of the workers and peasants against imperialist rule and the counter-revolutionary Kuomintang. Chinese bourgeois landowners have crushed and tortured tens of thousands of the best types of the workers and peasants and have brought on the country famine of the most incredible dimensions and horrors, even for China where famines are traditional. Already millions have perished in the famine and cannibalism and the sale of human beings into slavery have assumed alarming proportions. The price of rice has practically doubled in the past few months. The Chinese workers and toilers have been forced to take up arms virtually in order to save themselves from death by starvation. The dictatorship of the Kuomintang — now



split up into factions fighting amongst themselves—has brought the country to the verge of an abyss. It was accepted in certain quarters after the first victory of reaction in China that the period of capitalist stabilisation had set in under the rule of the Kuomintang. Tchen-du-shu and his clique proceeded to credit the Kuomintang with liquidating all the remnants of feudalism in China. Trotsky and the Chinese Trotskyists declared that any revolutionary struggle with Chinese reaction was nothing but a "Comintern adventure" and "fireworks." However, economic facts and the logic of the class struggle have proved far stronger than these enemies of the struggle of the proletariat. A good picture of the situation in China was given recently in a report issued by the Shanghai Economic Research Institute, from which the following extract is taken: "The economic crisis is most acute in the towns of Harbin, Mukden, Peipin, Hankow and Canton. In November in Mukden two hundred firms closed down, in December four hundred, in January six hundred, and in February more than a thousand. On an average every bankruptcy involved ten thousand Chinese dollars. In Harbin in January and February more than two hundred firms closed down, and in the month of March over four hundred were declared bankrupt. The capital of some of these amounted to more than half a million dollars. In Chanchung, in Central Manchuria, between December and March, four hundred firms were wound up, and in Peipin in the same period three thousand and five hundred firms went out of business. In February, 1930, in Shanghai seventy Chinese silk-spinning mills closed down. Furthermore, ten Chinese tobacco factories stopped work, including the largest in Shanghai. This fact meant that the local tobacco industry came to a standstill because it was unable to compete with the British-American Tobacco companies in the various parts of China. In Eastern Tchetshyan at the end of last year, two hundred silk weaving mills were closed and another hundred in January. In Fuchow ten foreign exchanges closed with a general deficit of a million dollars. They had fulfilled the function of local banks. During the month of March sixteen import firms closed down which were doing

business with the provinces of Tchangsei and Huandun. Formerly in Canton there were over a hundred weaving mills, but in February only three of these remained and were working under the greatest difficulties. Exclusive of the north and south of China four thousand enterprises ceased to exist in the provinces which constitute the economic centre of China."

Thirty years ago raw and manufactured silk constituted half of China's exports. Now they have fallen to one-fifth. Thirty-two per cent. of the one hundred and seventy silk weaving mills in the provinces of Tchetshyan and Tchangsoi have gone bankrupt. In 1929 the silk output was only sixty per cent. of the previous year. A similar crisis prevailed in the cotton industry. Of the ten cotton firms in Canton only three are doing business. Already in 1929 five per cent. of the two hundred and eighty enterprises throughout China were closed. The traditional branches of Chinese industry have been absolutely wiped out and new ones have not been able to flourish during the recent crisis. It is not the intention of this article to go into all the details of the balance sheet of the Kuomintang-Imperialist rule. It was as though a powerful army of barbarians swept through the country with fire and sword destroying everything it encountered! The new revolutionary wave has risen from the most profound economic and political crisis. The political crisis resulted in the complete overthrow of the rulers who were divided into the Nanking and Peipin cliques. Both these groups have in their ranks all shades of the bourgeois-landlord bloc, which even the supporters of imperialism admit is absolutely bankrupt. In Peipin the "left" Van-tsin-wei arose with the object of "fostering the hope of a more prosperous future." In the words of the *Peking and Tyan-tsin Times*, there never was a more incredible conglomeration of the most multifarious tendencies, beginning possibly with the first revolution."

The new revolutionary movement spells the doom of the dictatorship of the Chinese counter-revolution, which, despite its "attainments" at home, did not hesitate to appear on the international arena as the vanguard of the war against the U.S.S.R. It has been taught its lesson in a worthy manner.



## II.

It cannot be said that the new Chinese revolution has as yet reached a very advanced stage. There does not yet exist an immediate revolutionary situation throughout China. The disintegrated condition of the country, due to the rule of imperialism and the feudal elements, together with the competition between the militarist cliques, has influenced the development of the new revolutionary movement. This movement is unequal in its growth and gains ground first of all in those districts in which the 1925-27 revolution centred. Only by degrees is it extending to other provinces. It is clear that owing to the relative weakness of the movement the masses are not yet in a position to take control of industrial centres. The new revolutionary movement is mainly of the countryside where the peasantry rose against the arbitrary methods of the militarists, the plunder of the landlords and the rule of the Kuomintang. The peasant masses have armed and organised themselves, have seized and divided up the land of the landowners, and are fighting for justice from their deadly enemies whilst uniting under the Soviet flag. The partisans who played an extremely important rôle in the development of the movement, came into being with the 1925-27 revolution, and introduced the Soviet idea into the fog of Kuomintang reaction.

In August, 1929, peasant risings and mutinies amongst the soldiers began to take place on a large scale around this organised political nucleus. In the armies of the militarists, mutinies had long become an everyday occurrence. The mass of these soldiers was drawn from the ranks of the peasantry whose homesteads had suffered economical ruin. It is said that in many cases the mutineers sought the Communists for weeks and months on end in order to line up with the workers' and peasants' camps. The Chinese Communist Party has won for itself authority amongst the masses in spite of its shortcomings and errors. At the present moment an extremely important and responsible task falls to it: the struggle for the realisation of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry on a national scale. The Soviet movement brings home to the

Party the immediate importance of the task of organising a central Soviet Government, which would become the political standard and organised centre of the growing struggle. As to the establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government in China, the Party should note that it can only secure strength and significance by creating a real Red Army in the best organised regions, which would be entirely under the leadership of the Communist Party, and strong enough to become a real support to the Government. The Communist Party, together with the proletarian vanguard in China, must organise, educate and discipline the insurgent peasantry, since it is unavoidable that various groups will carry on a stubborn and determined struggle to escape the control of the Party.

Furthermore, with a wider political development of the Soviet movement they must logically direct the struggle towards seizure of industrial and administrative urban centres. Only in this way will it be possible to realise a far-reaching and well-organised union between the proletarian and peasant masses, and facilitate the leadership by the proletarian Party of the masses of peasants. The Communist Party must realise that one of its first tasks is to create a Red Army politically sound and fitted in every way for the struggle. It should not overlook the fact that the question of the establishment of the Soviet Government is one of extreme political importance. The task of a Provisional Revolutionary Government is to unite and co-ordinate to the utmost the peasant risings, and to uproot feudalism and militarism and repress the growing kulak elements. It is the duty of a Provisional Revolutionary Government to organise the revolution, that is to say, organise the agrarian revolution, bring about the liquidation of imperialist rule and the overthrow of the counter-revolutionary Kuomintang. The experience of the past few months has shown that anti-democratic elements have made every endeavour to isolate the Soviet power on the arrival of the Red forces. Former members of the Kuomintang, some few representatives of the gentry that escaped immediate justice, and to a large extent kulaks, endeavoured to propitiate the new Government in order to paralyse its revolutionary activity.



It is necessary to be able to combine the solution of the land problem with the establishment of the Soviet Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship. The present economic and political situation in China demands that the agrarian revolution should not be one headed by the rich peasantry, but by the poor and middle peasantry. The farm labourers and the village poor, in conjunction with the middle peasantry, all under the leadership of the workers, should constitute the vanguard of the movement. A determined effort must be made to prevent the kulaks from gaining control of the confiscated lands or dividing the land confiscated from the landowners in accordance with the equipment for production in the hands of the peasantry. The Party, in opposition to the kulaks, should demand the confiscation of the lands of all landlords, churches and other big private owners, and hand these lands over to the poor and middle peasantry by Government decree. The nationalisation of the land should be adopted as the main propaganda slogan and the Party should link up its realisation with that of the revolutionary movement throughout China and the victory of the workers' and peasants' dictatorship. The agrarian revolution constitutes the spring from which has arisen the present revolutionary wave. The young Chinese Soviet power can become the real all-Chinese Government provided the land is divided up amongst the peasantry and the kulaks are met with the most merciless opposition. The kulaks regard their interests as those of the landlords and even in those cases where the revolution has cut them off from their kind they try to prevent justice being meted out to the gentry and landowners in order to secure their own pound of flesh from the revolution.

The attempts of the Trotskyists to represent the Chinese revolution as the realisation of the permanent revolution can only be attributed to gross ignorance. The Chinese revolution must continue to progress under the slogan of the equal division of the land as the most radical method of solving the land question. Any endeavour to forge ahead with other slogans is a proof of utter forgetfulness of the nature of the revolutionary situation amongst the peasantry and would result in causing a split

between the workers and peasants, which is vital for the accomplishment of the revolution on an all-Chinese scale. Bound up with the tasks of the agrarian revolution on Soviet territory is the task of organising the farm labourers, village proletariat and poor peasants, with a view to winning over the middle peasants and securing the control of all Soviet organs. The Soviet organs should all be on an elective basis, no kulaks, gentry or petty landlords being eligible. Since peasant councils constitute the basic form of organisation of the peasant masses, the Party should adopt the policy of gradually transforming the peasant unions in the Soviet districts into peasant Soviets. The struggle with imperialism and feudalism in China has assumed such dimensions that all types of workers and also all strata of the peasant population are deeply involved in it. The Party should organise farm labourers and poor peasants as its most immediate supporters, otherwise the basic masses of the peasantry will remain without any real mass leadership. However, it would be a most serious error should measures be employed which might in any way antagonise the peasantry. The Party should realise that the basic task at this present stage is to develop the agrarian peasant revolution and extend the struggle against imperialism and the bourgeois-landlord bloc. All measures which the peasantry might consider as attacks on small peasant holdings should be avoided. There should be no trade restrictions nor attempts made to centralise supplies or to regulate internal trade and prices, except in special cases (salt, kerosene) when the exigencies of war demand, or in the struggle against speculators and sabotage. In every case such regulations should be made as a result of the demands of the toiling masses themselves. In order to improve the conditions of the workers the Soviet Power should introduce legislation for the eight-hour working day, a minimum of social legislation and freedom of organisation and activity for class trade unions. All further attainments in connection with improving the workers' conditions should on no condition be the result of administration from above. They should result from the organised class struggle in the interests of the workers.



Needless to say, in the present stage of the struggle the question of organising the armed forces of the workers and peasants should receive first consideration. The ranks of the Red Army should be increased by periodical mobilisation of the members of trade unions and groups of poor peasants as soon as they become organised. All attempts to fill the ranks of the army with untried elements should be opposed.

In the course of the development of the revolutionary struggle the Party should not forget the importance of concentrating the attention of the masses on the main slogans of the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government: the confiscation of the land from the landlords for the benefit of the peasantry, the struggle against imperialism, the nationalisation of all enterprises and concessions (in case they should break the laws of the Soviet rule in China), the establishment of a single Soviet Government for all China, the overthrow of the Kuomintang, the establishment of the eight-hour day and workers' control of production.

The work of the Party in the Soviet regions should be closely linked up with Party activities throughout Chinese territory, since only in this way can any real hegemony of the proletariat be realised. The establishment of the hegemony of the proletariat necessitates the struggle under the leadership of the Party for the further development of the strike movement and the control of the economic struggles of the Chinese workers. Furthermore, it implies the development of the anti-militarist movement under the control of the Party. Failure to unite the anti-militarist struggle with the agrarian revolution at the time of the 1925-1927 revolution resulted in the growth of liquidatory tendencies (Chen-du-tchism) and Trotskyism. At present these tendencies are openly hostile to the Party and the revolution, so that any concession in this direction would be equivalent to a deviation from the correct Party policy. In a situation such as that existing in China the Party should do all in its power to bring about the establishment of a Bolshevik-monolithic Party. The Chinese Communist Party has still to carry on a struggle against internal ills and shortcomings. The Right tendency advocates subser-

vience to the Kuomintang régime. It finds its expression in "kvostism," a desire to conform to legal methods and the fear of leading the economic struggle along political lines. It underestimates the real significance of the Soviet movement. The Rights constitute the real danger at the present stage, but there is also the Left tendency, which advocates the putsch method. The Chinese Party must, therefore, carry on a struggle on two fronts at the present time.

### III.

The bourgeois-landlord bloc was not able to find any solution for the antagonistic tendencies that resulted from the 1925-27 revolution. On the contrary it was the cause of intensifying and aggravating them. The revolutions of 1911 and 1925-27 were not sufficiently widespread, hence the bourgeois-democratic stage, with its many tasks, remained without any definite solution. These tasks of primary importance still remain to be solved and the new revolution must be directed towards the overthrow of imperialist rule, the liquidation of landlordism, the destruction of the bourgeois-landlord bloc and the establishment of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. From this it is clear that the present Chinese revolution bears the character of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Nevertheless, the Chinese revolution differs from the usual type of bourgeois-democratic revolution since the workers and peasants are not under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, but actually are fighting against them for the establishment of the bourgeois-democratic era. Another unusual feature of the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolution lies in the fact that its success opens up the possibility of the development of Socialism. The present revolution in China is also anti-militarist and thus prepares the way for the social revolution and proletarian dictatorship, whereas its anti-capitalist course of development will serve as the economic basis for the gradual growth of the present Chinese revolution into a Socialist revolution. There will be a big difference between the democratic dictatorship aimed at by the Bolsheviks in 1905 and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants in China. Not



only does the international situation account for this difference, but also the existence of the U.S.S.R., the country of proletarian dictatorship, which is successfully establishing Socialism.

The situation in China is such that it is very probable that Communists may be in the majority in the government. Another factor which constitutes a difference is the fact that the Chinese revolution is not only a fierce struggle against feudalism and militarism, but also against foreign capital. The democratic dictatorship in China will be compelled to confiscate enterprises run both by foreign and Chinese capital, which will of necessity constitute a step in the direction of Socialism. Thus the existence of Socialist elements constitutes the outstanding peculiarity of the new revolution in China. In comparison with the October Revolution the transition from capitalism to Socialism in China will have more intervening stages, though the period between the present revolution and the Socialist revolution will be considerably shorter than between that of 1905 and 1917. The economic and agrarian crises in China place the country before two alternatives: complete colonial subjugation, involving further oppression for the masses or the adoption of the Soviet, anti-capitalist and Socialist line of development.

During its early stages the Chinese revolution cannot of course deprive capitalism entirely of the possibility of development. On the contrary, after the destruction of landlordism and the militarist cliques, capitalism will show signs of further development. The anti-capitalist nature of the revolution, however, will lead to the ousting of capitalism and the organs of the dictatorship will utilise the control gained over the economic situation and gradually create the prerequisites for the development of the Socialist form of production. Both internal and external conditions will react favourably on the struggle.

In raising the question of the Soviet, anti-capitalist course of the revolution, there is no intention of adopting either the Trotsky theory or the petty bourgeois Utopian ideology of Sun-yat-Sen. In its course from the

bourgeois-democratic stage to that of the Socialist revolution the revolutionary movement in China is progressing along Bolshevik lines. The capitalist lords are already trying to console themselves by declaring: "Even if China should become red this will not indicate that the majority of the people have chosen Communism freely as a mode of life. The majority, more than 90 per cent. of the Chinese people know nothing about Communism. If China becomes red it will merely signify that the population has been carried away by such slogans as 'The division of the land and the non-payment of taxes,' 'Down with the oppressors, the gentry and the oppressors of the workers and peasants.'"

The *New York Times* of June 22 has made the discovery that should the present revolution be on Soviet lines then there is little chance for the imperialist efforts to crush such a powerful movement. They have begun their attack because they realise that their days are numbered. The Japanese were the first to approach the Kuomintang to join forces with international imperialism against the Communist. American capital, the infallible rival of Japan, has asked the Nanking Government to take definite measures for the "protection of American citizens." Already on August 1, the Japanese landlords and capitalists sent destroyers to China. American representatives in China have called on all American citizens to leave the "infected" areas, meaning, of course, that they had the intention to open fire in those districts. Intervention in China is going full speed ahead. The international bourgeois in the throes of a world economic crisis cannot look on quietly and see their last hope of the recuperation of the Chinese market destroyed. China will not be their panacea. In China the rule of the future is being prepared. On this account the imperialists have begun to bombard Soviet China. The international proletariat should not lose a moment in hastening to the assistance of Soviet China in its struggle for the freedom and independence of a new China of workers and peasants, who do not want to die under the yoke of the Kuomintang, but are fighting for the right to live under the Soviet flag.



## ON THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL-FASCISM IN GERMANY

**D**URING the past year national-fascism in Germany achieved big successes. In November, 1929, the communal elections had signalised the stormy growth of national-fascism. The average percentage increase in their votes compared with the maximum in the elections to the Reichstag election (1928) was 100-150, and in a number of towns 300-400. The last elections to the Saxony Landtag showed that national-fascism for one year (the previous elections were in 1929) almost trebled the number of its electors. On the eve of the September elections to the Reichstag, national-fascism will probably take away from the old bourgeois parties a significant number of the petty bourgeois and working-class votes.

In the past year national-fascism achieved big successes in its organisational development. Their official reports speak about a membership of 230-250 thousands, of 3,000 local groups. Probably all these figures are exaggerated. But it cannot be doubted that national-fascism has become organisationally a mass party, half of whose membership consists of the youth.

The rapid growth of national-fascism is the result of the economic crisis in Germany and in particular the Young Plan. The crisis ruins small commodity producers and petty economy in general. (The greatest successes of national-fascism are in the districts of the revived domestic industries of Saxony and Thuringia; in the many small towns of the Chemnitz region national-fascism increased the number of its electoral supporters by ten to fifteen times.) The crisis throws upon the street millions of unemployed, leads to a fall in the standard of life of the broad masses of the workers, reduction of wages, social insurance, etc., and fastens on the broad strata of toilers (including employees, small traders and artisans), new taxes, new custom duties and other burdens.

The petty bourgeois mass and the backward strata of the proletariat abandon the ranks of the old bourgeois parties, especially the ranks of the Nationalist Party, and partly the social democratic; these masses run to the camp of national-fascism because of its latest "radical" "revolutionary" way out of the situation, because the

social-democrats have already revealed themselves before the masses as the Party of the Young Plan and the active participator in the capitalist offensive.

In what consists the "radicalisation" of national fascism?

In the first place in *national demagogy*. The national-fascists found themselves political capital in that they were the first to start (and now continue) a hard campaign against the Young Plan. (In 1929 on their demand there was produced a preliminary national vote against the Young Plan, which gave them 7.5 million votes despite the counter-proposal of Hindenburg.) In connection with the clean-up in the Rhine region they conducted for example, a demagogic campaign against the "legend" of the emancipation of Germany from foreign bondholders; their slogan was nationalism, emancipate the Rhine region; but *all* Germany remained enslaved. By inflaming nationalistic moods they systematically reminded the masses that Alsace-Lorraine and the Saar were in bondage and amputated from the rest of Germany, that the German people could not with such obstacles destroy the governing party and the social-democrats as the party of German enslavement; they called for preparation in the struggle to destroy the Young Plan which was the cause of all the suffering and poverty of the German people. (This catch covered over the fact that the basic cause was the capitalist system of the ruling bourgeoisie.) This was the chief instrument of agitation of the national-fascists.

Already national demagogy no longer occupies the humble place it occupied in the agitation of the national-fascists as in 1923, but now it is the *main instrument* of the agitation.

In the second place, in social demagogy the national-fascists carry out the campaign against large commercial and banking capital (promising the masses to destroy their monopoly). They call for the help of the petty commodity producers, the petty owners, they demand that every German should have the right to labour, they propose compulsory contributions to the unemployed. They carry out a critical agitation



against a reduction in wages. At one time the national-fascists played with the slogan of a union with the U.S.S.R., and even now play with the slogan of a struggle against world finance capital.

The culminating point in the influence of national-fascism coincides with the beginning of its break-up. The organ of the National Party, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* no doubt had the essential point when it stated that this "process is more than a simple break-up of a party which had more or less temporary significance. In this case we have to do with the fall of national socialism which as such is fundamental." The present crisis of national-fascism is the beginning of its decomposition, is the clearest illustration of the antagonisms in the national-fascist movement.

National fascism is the direct instrument of big capital, but it uses the methods of unbridled nationalism and social demagoguery, attracting to itself the broad petty bourgeois mass and known strata of the workers, mainly the unemployed and working youth. These masses go over to national-fascism for its *Anti-Capitalist* slogans. But this anti-capitalist agitation is the demagogic instrument of national-fascism in the interests of capitalism. The class relations in Germany are such that there is a lesser probability of a fascist path of the Italian or Polish type developing. Hence the striving to take gradually into their hands the State apparatus. Hence the "change of post" Hitler-Hebbels; in the place of demagoguery, in the place of the slogan of "revolution" they hold to the course of coalition for conquering the State apparatus from within. But the entrance into the Government of the bourgeoisie signifies a block with the party of *BIG* capital (in Saxony there is now a dispute flaming up between the adherents of coalition as to whether the national-fascists can sit at one table with "the Jewish capitalist party" democrats, it signifies the broadcasting of loud phrases about "revolution," it signifies practical work for the realisation of the Young Plan, it signifies the continuation of the attack upon the toiling masses; it was the national-fascist minister Freek that brought forward at Thuringia the work tax on "negroes"—which was a tax levied on every negro in Thuringia. Hence the dissatisfaction in the ranks of the national-fascist mass.

It is as yet difficult to define the degree of the crisis and the strength of both groups. The apparatus basically remains with Hitler. The group of the late social-democratic Strasse plays, with the point of view of the bourgeoisie, "with fire."

What should be the tactics of our Party in the struggle with national-fascism and particularly in relation to both groups of national-fascism? The basic task consists in tearing the national-fascist mask of struggle for national independence and the social emancipation of the German people, and to counterpose their empty demagoguery with a real revolutionary programme of salvation for the toiling masses of Germany. It is necessary before all to ascertain—and this was already noted by the leading organs of the Communist Party of Germany—and calculate the delay in the matter of exposing the swindling demagoguery of national-fascism, in the matter of developing a revolutionary proletarian programme. Chiefly our task consists in proving to the masses that the German bourgeoisie accepted the Young Plan for the protection of its class rule and the strengthening of the exploitation of the masses, to prove to the masses that the Young Plan enslaves the German toilers, because the bourgeoisie transfer all the burdens of the plan to the shoulders of the toiling masses. Our task chiefly consists in proving to the masses that it is impossible to destroy the Young Plan without overthrowing the bourgeoisie and establishing a Soviet Power; the tearing up of the scraps of paper of the Young Plan and the Versailles Treaty; to prove to the masses that not a single power except a Soviet Power can decisively destroy the plan, because only a Soviet Germany in union with the U.S.S.R. could support the revolutionary proletariat of France, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, etc., could give resistance to the imperialist entente. Upon the basis of the coalition practice of the nationalist-fascists we can expose them as the fulfillers of the Young Plan in practice. It is necessary to take every event in the coalition tactics of the national-fascists, because here is their weak point, because the coalition tactics more than anything else will tear from them the mask of "revolutionaries" and "socialists." In the struggle with the Hitlers we can exploit the exposure of the Strasse group, especially the statement about the participation of Hitler in the intervention.



plan against the U.S.S.R., and the playing with British imperialism, etc. Against the social demagogy of national-fascism it is necessary to oppose a programme of proletarian revolution. One of the essential shortcomings in the struggle with national-fascism consisted in the fact that the Party did not provide a revolutionary programme arising from the crisis and threatening catastrophe. Such a shortcoming (as in the case of the struggle against equal fascism) was the result of the lack of initiative in the Party exhibited in relation to the daily demands of the masses, as also in the case of the organisation of the all-parliamentary mass movement, and in the parliamentary and municipal work. The slogan of the Party should be: In a Soviet Germany like in present-day U.S.S.R., there will be no unemployment.

In contradistinction to the agitation of the national-fascists against big commercial and bank capital, in contradistinction to the social demagogy of the national fascists on the issues of taxation, reduction of social insurance, their critical agitation against parasites, the Party could and should have developed a concrete programme of struggle, the programme of struggle of proletarian revolution, and show the masses what should be done and what the Communists would do as the Party of the proletariat—struggle for power.

Supported by the experience of the proletariat and the Russian bolsheviks, the Communist Party of Germany can develop a programme that will save the toilers of Germany from the threatening catastrophe.

The nationalisation of the factories and workshops, which would again work full-time, thanks to the close economic and political union with the U.S.S.R.

The proletarian nationalisation of all private banks, annulment of the State loans of the native capitalists.

The nationalisation of wholesale trade, the creation of powerful consumers' co-operatives, emancipate the toilers from the plundering lords. The confiscation of large estates, the settlement of the workers and town poor in the houses of the rich. The introduction of class principles in the payment for commercial services, the compounding of minimum payments for the lower strata of the proletariat.

The destruction of the taxation bacchanalia of the bourgeoisie; because the proletariat after power, with the expropriation of the factory owners, bankers, private estate owners, traders, etc., creates all the conditions for a class budget of the proletarian State.

The destruction of the rule of the landowners. The transfer of the land to the poor peasants. The creation of soviet farms. The equalling of the conditions of labour of the agricultural proletariat with those in the town. Here we have a real programme of salvation for the toilers of Germany. This programme is real because it is already carried out in life, in a country which comprises one-sixth part of the world. Already long ago in the U.S.S.R. the iron proletarian broom has swept away all landlords, factory owners, bankers, large traders, generals, bourgeois politicians and speculators of all kinds and breeds. And how national-fascism serves capital in the "salvation" of the toilers we know from the experience of Italy and Poland. In both these countries there rages a cruel terror. Hundreds of thousands of the proletariat are unemployed, and hundreds of thousands of others work nine to ten hours a day and receive starvation wages. In both these fascist countries as before, there rule the capitalists, landlords and speculators. In both these countries millions of the peasant masses groan under the power of landlordism, ruined by the agrarian crisis and the pressure of taxation.

The unfolding of a revolutionary proletarian programme is the best method of struggling with national-fascism—the Party that tries to repress the developing proletarian revolution.

The imminent election campaign provides an excellent opportunity for the Party to reach the most backward strata of the proletariat, to the broadest strata of the peasantry—with a proletarian and revolutionary programme of salvation for the toilers of Germany from the yoke of Young and Morgan on the one side, and the groups of Tyssens and Goldschmidts on the other.

This maximum programme will have the more success the closer its propaganda will be united with concrete slogans, and the concrete exposure of national fascism. The activities of Freek, the strike-breakers of the national-fascists in Mansfield, Ruhr, etc., their voting in the Reichstag, provide rich materials for their



exposure and the agents of capital. This maximum programme will have the more success the more closely its propaganda will be connected with the developing and organisation of economic struggles, the more energetic the Party will be in proclaiming the movement of the toilers in town and countryside in their struggle against the taxation bacchanalia, against new taxes, etc. One of the main methods of practical struggle with national-fascism is to recruit the workers of the N.R.S.P.\* and the Social Democratic Party (into the committees of struggle, the creation of a united front between the strikers and the other strata of the toilers), against the Young Plan, against the monopoly of capital, etc. ; exposing the strike-breaking role of the national fascists in the existing strikes.

How should we appraise both these groups of national-fascism ?

The most dangerous of these two groups is the group of "revolutionary national socialists," the group of Strasse. Later its role will be all the more one of the holding back of the process of emancipation of the mass, because it is resurrected as a "clean" national-socialist party. Its objective role is to hold back the departure of the masses from the influence of fascism, to assist national fascism in keeping its influence. Between Hitler and Strasse there is created an objective division of labour. Hitler will participate in the fascisation of Germany entering the government, etc. ; Strasse as the opposition, as the enemy of coalition, will be occupied in cries of demagoguery.

The breaking of the mass away from national-fascism is possible only through a merciless struggle with the group of Strasse. In the agitation against Strasse it is necessary to start with the task of tearing the mask from these people who provocatively use the slogans of socialism and revolution.

The Strassers declare that they are the "revolutionary national-socialists," but we must aim at getting the broad masses of the workers to directly ask them the question: against WHOM, in WHOSE NAME do they want to make a revolution ? It is necessary to expose them in this manner in order that the masses may be clear that the Goldschmidts are inseparably connected with the Tyssens, and Siemens

Groups, on the basis of exploitation,—the capitalist monopoly of the means of production. It is necessary to expose them as provocators.

Their "playing" with the U.S.S.R. and colonies it is necessary to expose as the calculated playing of a wing of the German bourgeoisie (which deviates between the politics of accommodation with the entente and the exploitation of the antagonisms between British imperialism and France on the one side, and the U.S.S.R. and the colonies on the other), because they themselves emphasise that unity with the U.S.S.R. and support to the colonial revolution is necessary in the national interests—i.e., in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

The fact that the group of Strasse is much weaker than Hitler, that Strasse exposes the Hitlers, must not for a single moment conceal the basic perspective—the role of the Strassers as the "Left" national-fascists, as the most pernicious fascist agents of the bourgeoisie.

The development of the struggle against national fascism does not signify a weakening of the struggle against the social-democrats. Social-fascism was, is, and will be the MAIN weapon of the bourgeoisie in the struggle for stabilisation, in the attack upon the proletariat, in the struggle with the proletariat. National-fascism and social-fascism are the TWO HANDS OF THE BOURGEOISIE. National-fascism must catch those masses that are getting out of the influence of the bourgeois parties and which are not in a condition to be caught or held by social-fascism. As it happens, experience in Germany provides irrefutable proof that the fascists and social-fascists are working together for the fascisation of the bourgeois order. Zevering as the Imperial Minister for Internal Affairs, and Freck as the Thuringian Minister, have already given an example of their actual unity in the struggle against the working-class despite their seeming opposition to each other.

The sharper the world economic crisis becomes the higher will rise the revolutionary wave, the closer will be the unity between fascism and social-fascism. This is why we must develop a broad campaign against national-fascism—we must at the same time connect this campaign with a merciless exposure of social-fascism, we must tear from it the mask of struggling for "democracy."

In every way we must attempt to create an

\* National Revolutionary Socialist Party.—Trans.



united front with the social-democratic WORKERS in the struggle against fascism, against the capitalist offensive, we must at the same time show them, that their leaders, their party was equally as active a factor in the creation of the fascist dictators as the party of Hitler.

Only by directing our blows in such a direction can we draw the broad masses from under the influence of the social-fascist bureaucrats as from under the influence of national fascism. The campaign which the Communist Party of Germany is conducting in connection with the

elections, shows that the Party stands UPON THE CORRECT PATH. By energetically developing this campaign, closely linking the election campaign with the campaign of organising the economic struggles of the proletariat, transferring the centre of gravity of the election campaign and the campaign against fascism and social-fascism to the factories—the Communist Party of Germany can in the immediate future make a new and decisive step forward in its struggle for the majority of the working-class.

## BRIAND'S POLICY AND FRENCH HEGEMONY IN EUROPE

By A. DE VRIES.

### I.

ON 17th May, 1930, the French Government addressed its famous memorandum to the European States and requested that it should be answered not later than the 15th July. That request has now been met, although the last answers—including England's—were only received on the 18th July.

The immediate objective of Briand's note was the organisation of a meeting of all European governments which are members of the League of Nations, to discuss a federative alliance within the European world. All the governments to whom it was addressed have accepted this invitation with the correct diplomatic courtesy.

Does this mean that so far Briand's plan has succeeded? Or does it mean that the capitalist states of Europe have really been drawn closer together, even if only for a short time? Neither the one nor the other is true, as a glance at the correspondence on the subject will show.

It is still true, however, that the Pan-Europe plan as put forward by Briand, will continue to occupy a central position in European imperialist policy and will serve as a slogan for the bourgeoisie in its fight against Communism and the Soviet Union.

We must therefore again ask, what is the real political content hidden within this pacifist cloud; and the actual facts, particularly the substance of the notes sent in reply to the French Government, offer abundant material for answering this question.

The step taken by Briand is a highly decorated attempt to safeguard the hegemony of French capitalism in Europe, in so far as it already exists, and to strengthen, extend and organise that hegemony. It is directed against all the dangerous opponents of French imperialism—against the U.S.A. and its economic offensive; against Italian fascism with its economic, colonial and military demands; against any revision of the Versailles Treaty; and, in particular, against the danger of revolution and the citadel of the world proletariat, the Soviet Union. And it is peculiarly characteristic of this move on the part of the French bourgeoisie that it should have occurred to it to consolidate and organise its hegemony; it is no longer satisfied with the League of Nations, where French influence is rivalled by British influence, it wants a new European League of Nations, but one exactly following the example of the Geneva institution—that is, with a European conference, an executive committee and a secretariat, in which not all States will have equal rights, but the big States preponderate, which means that the United States of Europe would be under French control, for it was clear from the beginning that in this case the British Empire will have nothing to do with it. The French bourgeoisie is thus trying to achieve that leadership in Europe which it has not possessed since the time of Napoleon. The question which first arises, then, is: on what economic basis does this bold policy rest? France has



been known for a century as a country with only a weak development of capitalist productive forces : how can it now again put forward its claim to the leadership of the European bourgeoisie ?

## II.

In 1929 the economic attaché to the British Embassy at Paris, Mr. T. R. Cahill, wrote in his *Report on the Economic Situation in France in 1928* :

"For many years the production of industry has been limited only by the supply of labour forces ; between 1921 and 1927 one and-a-half million foreign workers were imported into France. The machinery of production has been considerably extended and improved, and this process is still continuing at the present time, partly as a result of reparation payments. Two new railway routes to Spain and one to Italy are in course of construction or already open, as well as a new line over the Vosges to Strasburg. The electrification of the railway system is making rapid progress. All French harbours have been widened. Of the 381,000 municipalities, the following numbers were provided with electric light :

1911	1922	1927	1928
2,000	8,200	16,000	18,000

In recent years coal-mining has made great progress. From 1926 to 1928 the mining companies in the north opened 500 new coke ovens, which produce 700 to 900 tons per day and are equipped with the necessary machinery for the utilisation of by-products. In 1925 only 44 per cent. of the coal was extracted by pneumatic drills, while in 1927 the figure had risen to 75 per cent. Iron foundries have also increased their productive capacity ; the production of iron rose from 8½ million tons in 1925 to 10 million tons in 1928 ; of steel from 7.4 to more than 8 million tons in the same period. Machine factories have considerably improved their equipment by the import of new American, English and German tool machines, particularly for the automobile, electric and locomotive industries. The great progress which has been made in the machine industry is shown by the increase in exports from 313,000 tons in 1913 to 1,469,000 tons in 1927, while in the same period imports fell from 440,000 to 250,000 tons. The textile industry has also been extended, par-

ticularly artificial silk, and the same is true of the chemical industry."\*

This quotation gives a picture of the rapid capitalist advance of industry ; rapid, at least, for capitalism, for in recent years socialist construction in the Soviet Union has made us familiar with a much more rapid rate of development.

Since 1928 French industrial capital has given evidence of great powers of resistance. France was drawn into the present world economic crisis later than all the other countries. Favourable conditions in France lasted up to the end of 1929, and indeed, on to February, 1930. In 1929 the consumption of coal was 13 per cent. greater than in 1928.

This does not mean that, within the capitalist section of world economy, France occupies an exceptional position, or that it will not be affected by the general crisis of capitalism, as the right-wing opportunists used to maintain of the United States. In the last few months the crisis has been developing within French industry, and it was preceded by a severe agrarian crisis. Nevertheless it is true that French capitalism was able to put forward comparatively the greatest resistance, that after the war it made considerable industrial progress and experienced a period of prosperity which lasted for several years and is only now approaching its end.

How can these facts be explained ? The general economic picture of France is well known ; France is an agrarian country with a stagnant population, small scale production which developed slowly and was predominantly concerned with light industry (textiles and luxury goods) ; the savings of the *rentiers* and middle classes were utilised chiefly for financing foreign States and undertakings. This picture is true of the facts, not as they are, but as they were in the decades which followed the war of 1870. But the picture has changed, and the change began before the world war. In the years preceding 1914 heavy industry, which transformed the face of the country, began to advance.

This is not the place to examine in detail the preparations for war made by French heavy industry and the Government which served it ;

\* Retranslated from the German.



nor the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and the occupation of the Ruhr when these steps seemed to promote the interests of heavy industry ; nor the use that was made after the war of inflation, the provisions of the Versailles Treaty, the payment of reparations in kind and the additional wealth of the Saar coal district to strengthen its economic position. The union of the Briey area with the ore mines of Lorraine gave France a tremendously important industrial area, and French capitalism now controls much more than half of the European iron ore reserves.

During the war German imperialism and social imperialism realised well the future importance of Lorraine. On 18 February, 1916, the well-known social democrat Hué said in the Prussian *Landtag* : "It is an interesting fact, which also has a certain political importance, that we are coming to rely more and more on phosphoric ores, which are to be found chiefly in Lorraine. This induces me, as a labour representative who comes from the mining industry, to emphasise with particular weight the fact that, should Alsace-Lorraine be separated from the German Empire, it would mean a fatal blow to the iron and steel industry, to the mining industry and to the millions of workers engaged in the allied industries."

In dealing with the special local advantages of that area H. Wendel, another social imperialist, said in 1916 : "Since the production of a ton of pig iron requires three tons of ore and one ton of coke, Westphalian coke is transported along the 350 kilometres of railway to the iron ore district . . . Since the Rhine-Westphalian iron industry uses foreign ore, the transport of which is becoming more and more difficult and expensive, it is bound to be surpassed soon by the Lorraine industry ; the chief centre of German economic life will, in the not far distant future, be found in Lorraine."\* Herr Wendel's prophecy is being fulfilled, but in a manner quite different from his expectations.

After the war French heavy industry made rapid progress ; the production of pig iron which in 1913 amounted to a monthly average of 484,000 tons, rose in 1918 to 882,000 tons ;

steel production increased in the same period from 396,000 to 783,000 tons per month. French heavy industry won the European market, and made itself partly independent of foreign coke. French heavy industry is at the basis of French militarism, with its powerful air force and navy, and of the entire system of vassal States in Europe (Belgium, Yugo-Slavia, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland) operated by French imperialism. The *Comité des Forges* exercises as unlimited a rule under Tardieu as it did under Poincaré ; closely united with the big banks, it occupies the leading position within the French bourgeoisie. French capitalism received international acknowledgment of the changed relation of forces in the establishment of the International Crude Steel Association, which was founded in 1926, considerable sacrifices being made by the German industry. France received a quota of 31 per cent. against Germany's 43 per cent., while the French industry, despite its rapid growth in the last pre-war years, produced in 1913 less than a quarter as much as the German steel industry. How advantageous this agreement is to the French industry is indicated by the fact that the French quota amounts to 94.6 per cent. of the output capacity of the French steel industry, while the German quota only amounts to 72.3 per cent. of the corresponding figure.† Within the cartel itself France again succeeded in obtaining special privileges : "According to the last decision of the cartel, France has been given an increase in its quota, in the event of a fall in the home market, equal to 60 per cent. of the lesser amount, while Germany Belgium and Luxemburg only received 50 per cent."

In the last few weeks the International Crude Steel Association has been shaken. On July 21 the *Berliner Tageblatt* maintained that the agreement was breaking down, and according to the *Vorwärts* of 20 July it was France and Belgium which entered the German market and undercut German prices.

The economic basis of the political offensive being conducted by French imperialism can be found, therefore, in the development of French heavy industry, actually this sudden advance of a country which, from the industrial stand-

\*Quoted in Kautsky's *Alsace-Lorraine*, pp. 79-81. Kautsky has nothing else to say, than to ask the question whether the life of the German iron industry depends on such "technical details."

†See Respondek : *Economic Co-operation between Germany and France*, p. 127.



point, was for decades merely vegetating, offers a striking confirmation of the correctness of Lenin's theory of the unequal development of capitalism, particularly in the age of imperialism.

### III.

Has Briand's Pan-Europe plan failed? If one adopts the attitude that the intention behind the French move was to organise capitalist Europe, to eliminate the contradictions between States and groups of States, and to establish peace and harmony, then the fiasco is incontestable. For the answers which were received to the memorandum speak not of an amelioration, but of a sharpening of the contradictions; they show how hopelessly entangled the European bourgeoisie is and how its internal enmities are continually increasing in acuteness.

But to regard the situation in this light would be to adopt a pacifist attitude. The United States of Europe is not to be established, and nobody, least of all the French politician, ever considered this as a real possibility. The hostility has not been smoothed away; this was to have been accomplished only in words. Let us examine the separate answers more closely. Briand, as was to be expected, received full support from the dependent allies of French imperialism—Yugo-Slavia and Poland, Rumania, Belgium and Czecho-Slovakia. France was assured of their support from the start.

The fate of Briand's proposal rested on the answers of the Great Powers—Italy, Germany and England.

The Italian answer, which arrived first, has been regarded everywhere as a direct challenge to French imperialism. It was preceded by a sensational article from Mussolini, in which he derided the idea of Pan-Europe and openly demanded the revision of the peace treaty. Revision—but in whose interests? In the interests of the victorious countries who are dissatisfied with their share of the Versailles booty, i.e., revision in the interests of Italy itself. Revision of the Versailles Treaty has another meaning in Berlin, Vienna and Bukarest.

This demand was not repeated in the official answer of 4 July. In that answer Italy—like all the other States to which the memorandum was addressed—stated its readiness to co-operate, but put forward its own programme, which is poles apart from the French programme.

In particular, Mussolini—like the majority of those who answered—opposes the form of organisation outlined by France. No permanent secretariat and no "executive committee." The League of Nations must not be allowed to suffer a setback because of the new institution.

It is easy to understand what lies behind this hypocritical tenderness for the League of Nations. In the Geneva concern French imperialism is not the undisputed master, but it is anxious to attain that position in the European "League of Nations." Consequently, Briand proposes that the real power in the European union should rest with an executive committee, on which the representatives of a few States only are to sit. This means that France and her vassal States would be able to do exactly as they pleased with the committee. It is not surprising that this obvious plan should have been rejected by all with the exception of the French vassal States.

Briand stated that his proposals were based on the absolute sovereignty of the individual States. Mussolini agrees with this idea and draws the somewhat unexpected conclusion that absolute sovereignty also implies the absolute equality of States and that consequently any distinction between victors and vanquished must be ruled out.

After this homage has been paid to the defeated parties in the world war, his attack is directed on a particularly surprising point. Briand addressed himself only to the members of the League of Nations; Mussolini proposes to the Government of the French Republic that Turkey and the Soviet Union should also be included in the invitation. Finally, fascism takes this opportunity of making a thorough attack on the political premise underlying the French proposal—security. "Not security, but disarmament!"—so runs the Italian thesis. This means that there is to be no new ratification of the French imperialist robbery carried out at Versailles, but a reduction in France's military strength.

It is interesting to note how Italian fascism makes use of "pacifist" and "democratic" phrases in this document, interesting and characteristic of the value of these phrases, and of the development of bourgeois democracy in the direction of fascism.



The Italian answer is thus decisively hostile to French policy, and this hostility makes use of every possible method—coquetting with the demands of Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc., democratic gestures and advances to the Soviet Union and to Turkey—in order to upset the French game.

Still, Mussolini leaves the bridge to negotiations open. Italy will take part in the European conference. Whether on that occasion Italy will resolutely resist the policy of French imperialism depends on its ability in the meantime to force important concessions from French imperialism.

The German answer is of decisive importance to Briand's plan; for it is the object of French imperialism to draw Germany into its orbit, to complete the "west orientation" of the German bourgeoisie.

The German answer was written in an extraordinarily cautious and restrained tone. German co-operation is promised, but in a manner which reveals quite another line of thought. The countries of Europe—far from being on terms of peaceful equality—are weighed down by disputes and contradictions of the most varied kind. . . . The German Government visualises the objective of the plan as a courageous reform, undertaken in a spirit of mutual understanding, of conditions admitted to be untenable.

The French Government emphasises the necessity of attacking European problems first of all from the political side, and of proceeding to deal with economic questions only when certain political conditions have been fulfilled. The German Government can agree with the French Government in so far as it, too, is convinced that to a large extent the cause of the present situation in Europe is to be found in the political formation of that continent at the present time.

These modest phrases contain an entire programme. It is the programme of revision of the Versailles Treaty and cancellation of war debts. The programme, however, is not developed. The German Government is content with a reference to its attitude towards the various questions of security, disarmament, national minorities, etc. A change is requested, on the ground that it is purposeless to expect to build up a new Europe on foundations which will

not offer real support to its living development. The note leaves the reader in darkness concerning the appearance of this "new Europe."

In the same way the exclusion of Russia and Turkey is regarded as contradictory to the "practice which has hitherto been justly exercised." Nevertheless the German answer does not make the participation of these two countries a condition for her own co-operation.

For Germany, Briand's proposal means her subjection to the political leadership of French imperialism and the economic leadership of French heavy industry. The proposal has not been accepted, nor could it be, for the Young Plan and the crisis have accentuated the contradictions between "victors" and "vanquished" to the utmost. Neither has the proposal been rejected. Briand's suggestion and the German answer are only the beginning of negotiations between French and the new German imperialism, negotiations intended, not to eliminate all the contradictions between the two—that is impossible—but to effect temporary co-operation against the common enemy, the United States, and in particular, of course, against the Soviet Union.

Briand's semi-official spokesman, the well-known journalist Sauerwein, wrote in the *Matin* of the advantages which would accrue to Germany from a "European union established on the basis of a Franco-German entente." He mentions financial "help" from France to Germany—such as support for Germany on the debt question as against the United States; an increase in German military strength and finally a connection with East Prussia. In doing this, Sauerwein hastens to assure his Polish allies that there can be no question of a closer approach to the Danzig "corridor" through Germany, but at the most of better economic connections.

The English note indicates the difficult position of British imperialism to-day. This explains the "temporary" character of the answer which, on the pretext of the necessity for a thorough examination, does not take up any attitude at all with regard to a great number of questions in the memorandum. But it is clear that the British bourgeoisie feels that its interests are threatened by this move on the part of France. Consequently, the note, apart from the usual diplomatic phrases about sympathy for



the cause of peace and solidarity, contains an unconditional refusal, particularly in relation to the organisational aspect of Briand's plan. No new institutions, no European secretariat, no executive committee. The authority of the League of Nations (and England's strong position at Geneva!) must not be endangered. Therefore the whole question should be dealt with at the meeting of the League of Nations. England is anxious to detach any independent significance from the French move.

These are the positive results of Pan-Europe so far. At the moment—as was to be expected—they are but few. Briand has found only one faithful ally—that is the Second International, and particularly German social democracy, which sees in Briand's plan a valuable support for its anti-Soviet campaign.

Even if, however, the result so far has been small, the plan itself is not thereby put aside.

It is part of the war preparations of French imperialism, just as much as the feverish building of armaments by France and its vassal States, just as much as the growth of fascism in South Slavia and Rumania, Poland and the Border States, and just as much as the gold policy of the Bank of France, which is forcing gold imports from everywhere in order to increase its resources.

The economic situation makes the French bourgeoisie at the present time the moving force in the war preparations against the Soviet Union, and the Pan-Europe policy is one of its instruments.

This gives the revolutionary workers of the world sufficient reason for following closely and fighting resolutely the further development of this imperialist policy, which is being conducted under a cloak of pacifist talk.

## MAXTONIANA

I.—“COMMON SENSE” OF YESTERDAY.

**W**ITHIN the ranks of the English proletariat a deep inner change is taking place which is altering its whole attitude. It is beginning to take up a position of struggle, of uncompromising struggle with capitalism. The workers are thoroughly fed-up with the sanctimonious hypocrisy of Fabian socialism, and its open support of the bourgeoisie under the guise of defending the interests of the workers. The proletariat thirsts for a real leadership of action. In the search for a direct reply to its needs, the proletariat instinctively turns to the Soviet Union, where socialism is being constructed not by words, but by deeds, having won the power to build socialism, by heroic struggle. There the proletariat has the future to look to. This is natural. But it is not so simple. English capitalism strangles the throat of the workers with the hands of the “Labour” Government. Sliding along the edge of a precipice, it wants to stave off the day of its fall, at the expense of the workers. It forces a dirty rag into the mouths of the English workers, so that they are unable to call for assistance. It throws dust in their eyes, so that they are unable to see around them aught save the opposition of Cook-Maxton, who are unique specimens of their kind, and almost

inimitable in their prostitution of all elements of class-consciousness. Capitalism crushes the workers of to-day, by forcing underground revolutionary spontaneity. The worker in “free” England has not the right to his own newspaper. He is—a pariah of bourgeois society. In England the bourgeoisie and their labour lieutenants are able to make this felt, are able to represent the struggle of the classes, socialism and revolutions, as “funny and barbaric.” In England it is possible to make fun of, hunt down, to spurn every independent step of the worker, every indication of class struggle. It is a country which has tremendous experience and tradition in dealing with labour. The worse the position of the British bourgeoisie in the world market, the further they lag behind their competitors, the more they are interfered with in India, China, Egypt, and Palestine, the more they endeavour to recompense themselves at the expense of the humiliation of the English workers, rewarding them with police and ideological boxes on the ear.

The correspondent of the Berlin *Vorwärts* Egon Wertheimer has given expression to his love for English social-fascism in the publication of a bulky book. English social-fascism is a “workers’ movement” from the tribune of



which is wafted the aroma of aristocratic perfumes ; some pedigree upstart like Oswald Mosley (together with Lord Curzon's daughter) can with one bound leap on to the backs of the workers ; there is no semblance of Marxism in the Labour Party. He says "The Marxist teaching in Europe was directed towards hired slaves. But the British workers never felt themselves to be of this category, and, therefore, were not prepared for acceptance of this Marxist conception." (Portrait of the L.P.)

The canaille of *Vorwärts* of course, have in mind the labour bureaucracy and aristocracy, which was unable to disassociate itself ideologically from "its" bourgeoisie, participating together with it, in the exploitation of the colonies. Now, however, even considerable numbers of the labour aristocracy have fallen under the knife of rationalisation and unemployment. But they have brought with them, from those distant days, into the disillusionment of to-day, an ideological fear in the face of the might of capital, no desire to struggle against it, superstitions of their bygone middle-class existence. These elements create an ideological echo of the Maxtons and Cooks. In the face of the catastrophic conflict of the prosperous past and the tragic present, they help the English bourgeoisie to grind into the dust the class awakening of the English workers. Becoming confused in contradictions, they naïvely stretch out their hands for aid to naïve empiricism : attempt to solve the contradictions of decaying capitalism by the aid of middle-class "common-sense." They are full of vacillations, are swept off their feet, and at the least sign of loss of equilibrium seek aid in their past, becoming dependent on left social-fascism. "Left" social-fascism appeals to the transitional stage of a number of elements of the one-time labour aristocracy. It raises the screen of yesterday in order to block the path to the future, to bolshevism, to the proletarian consciousness and revolutionary irreconcilability.

## 2.—"SOCIALISM IN OUR TIME."

"My Bill to make wage reductions illegal in Great Britain is now before the House for second reading. The Bill is not popular with certain political and trade union leaders, so there must be 'some' good in it. My chief reason for introducing the Bill is that it is badly needed,

and had it been passed in the year 1922, there would not be almost two million unemployed in England now." (*New Leader*, 18th July, 1930.)

Here you have before you an obvious jester, in the first place thrusting before you his own bankruptcy with all the more obstinacy, the less chances there are of his suggestions being accepted. Only a "David Kirkwood" of the English breed of labourites is capable of suggesting to the Parliament of banking sharks and colonial destroyers to "forbid" wage reductions, without touching capitalism or even without disturbing it. The suggestion is put forward in order to divert attention from the Parliamentary comedy. The idiocy of the Bill of the I.L.P. ceases to be such idiocy if you take into consideration the fact that Kirkwood manufactures platform stunts in order to make Cook's task all the easier—of interfering with the unemployed workers' movement. Cook, not so long ago, without any constraint or reservations, blurted out "It is a crime to bring men and women to London, without reserving for them food and lodging." This was in connection with the hunger march to London. It was opposed by English "sound common sense" which can in no way understand that the provision of the unemployed with food and lodging must and should be the task of struggle. But this self-same "sound common sense" made Cook the initiator and organiser of the Conference of "Industrial Peace" and that same "sound common sense" does not prevent the "independent" prophet Maxton stating with a serious countenance that the "Independent Labour Party is endeavouring to introduce a new social order as soon as this will be possible, without shedding one drop of blood."\* In India, Egypt, Palestine and China during the last few months rivers of blood have been shed ! But then, this is only happening in India, Egypt, Palestine, and China! And is it not true that MacDonald warns the "backward" nations almost twice, nay, thrice a day, against delaying the "perfection" of the world†, of all the oppressive atmosphere of capitalist crisis and the breaking up of stabilisation ?

"I do not want the fall of the Labour Government" recently said Maxton. "I desire it every

\* Retranslated *New York Times*, 20/6/30.

† *Daily Herald*, 23/7/30, retranslated.



success, a brilliant and undoubted success, and I wish it success *before* the general elections.†

You understand how, despite all his attachment to naïve empiricism of petit-bourgeois common sense, under all the expanse of independent ideas of body movement, Maxton does not take his eyes away from the "voting herds" whom it is necessary to shepherd into the Baldwin, Lloyd George, MacDonald pen"!

The anxiety on the part of the "left" social-fascists to see that this is in order is the highest degree of hypocritical betrayal on their part.

"The policy which is needed to-day, should strive definitely and straightforwardly to the introduction of a new social order."\*\* What, Mr. Maxton, you already no longer fear the shedding of a drop of bourgeois blood together with the rivers of blood of colonial workers and peasants; you are not afraid of disturbing the capitalists?

This is only a rhetorical question. Nobody would suspect Maxton of bolshevik cannibalism. And he frightens not a single English bourgeois. He *sooths* them with his sharp "outbursts" of a parliamentary taming of the masses, able to reserve popularity—for elections—to advantage, in the same manner as good housewives pickle their onions in good time.

"So long as the Government remains in power and seriously claims responsibility," jibingly remark the liberal patrons of the MacDonalds and Maxton, "there will be a group of disobedient socialists from the left. Their number will vary, But the Labour Government cannot exist without this *amusement*. The history and mixed composition of the Labour Party makes this inevitable. If they were to be really logical and throw out the rebels, or force them to bow the knee, then the Labour Party would become a completely different type of Party (retranslated, *Manchester Guardian*, 26th July, 1930).

The far-seeing capitalists are all for the independents in the Labour Party, as it is specifically they who permit the proletarian struggle and socialism being *represented* in a clownish top-hat and allow and assist in the *suppression* of the struggle of the working-class, covering their own interests by it. All this is called "socialism in our time"; not that socialism

which was born of October and is being built up in the U.S.S.R., but its opposite, social-fascism, and police-parliamentary mockery of socialism.

### 3.—OPEN COLONIAL SPEECHES.

For the English bourgeoisie and its caretakers, the Labour Party, the whole world is divided into England, colonies and potential colonies; that is, countries which may become colonies. In England, bourgeois absolutism is clothed by parliamentary forms, and if here or there from under the seams a bayonet or stick peers forth, they hastily transform them into objects of the highest form of constitutional freedom.

Quite another picture in the colonies. There imperialism reigns without any disguise.

At one time the independents tried to join in the anti-imperialist League and were even able to deceive some Communists who were not very sound. Now they don't even make a secret of their profession: they "conciliate" MacDonald with Gandhi in the name of the Anglo-Indian counter-revolution. "The ordinary man, reading that in India a number of Indians have been shot down, or beaten, has an unpleasant feeling. He does not like it; he would like to stop it, something there is out of order. But, after all, if the people are "rebeling" what can the Government do, even the Labour Government? It cannot countenance open disorder and force.\*

You, no doubt, guess that this is one of the independent servants of capital who has mixed in with the crowd and sanctimoniously brings forth his philosophy, which in Tzarist Russia was propagated from every police department.

If England stole India from the Indians then is this not a reason for rising against the power of the bayonet? But uprisings are only recommended with the blessings of the popes and the English lords, when intervention against the soviets is the order of the day.

But in India it is not so bad, argues Brailsford. The force employed was not so great—on the side of the Indians of course. The English force is not considered.

"In the beginning India was not on the side of Gandhi. It considered him to be too impatient. Thanks to its savagery, the police put the whole nation on his side. The liberal leaders, opposed to him, openly admitted that

† Retrtranslated *Daily Herald*, 23/4/30.

\*\* Retrtranslated *Daily Telegraph*, 16/6/30.

\* Retrtranslated from *The New Leader*, 18th July.



their adherents went over to him. Even the musselman masses were enthralled by the nationalist current."

Inference. It is necessary to make a decision about something, in order to take the initiative into one's hands. The Round Table Conference will fail without Gandhi. It is necessary to create a defensive alliance of English and Indian capital and the landed aristocracy against the revolutionary upheaval. The resolution of the National Council of the Independent Labour Party acknowledges "the right of the Indian peoples to self-determination and independence and calls upon the Labour Government to liberate the political prisoners, and start negotiations with Indian representatives on the basis of the creation of a completely responsible Government."

In such a manner, the independence of India is transformed into . . . a responsible Government, appointed in London !

And Brailsford has the impertinence to refer to Russian tsarism, warning England from treading the same path. At the same time, this same Brailsford offers India the politics of the well-known tsarist minister Protopov on the eve of the downfall of tsarism. This tsarist minister was the last harbour of tsarism. The practices of Protopov are as close to these "lefts" as the blue gendarmes of Protopov's ideal.

Cook, the inevitable Cook, who appears at every political manœuvre, made a fuss of Joshi and Chamanlal, the organisers of the yellow Anglo-police trade unions in India, and who were thrown out of the All-Indian Congress of Trade Unions last year, and handed over to them £100 collected from the pockets of the hungry English miners. This is a "liberal gesture" when we consider the niggardliness of Cook's children.

#### 4.—FROM COOK TO MAXTON AND BACK.

Oswald Mosley, who came out of the MacDonald Ministry in order to raise his prestige, had declared what is, in his opinion, the means of saving England ; namely, the raising of the purchasing power of the wide masses of the population. The I.L.P. has made this its banner. In a country which was, thanks to the class struggle, more educated than England, such machinations of liberal-minded aristocrats would cause uproarious laughter. But in

MacDonald's England, despite two million unemployed, despite the developing struggles in all the basic industries, this nonsensical project to raise the standard of living of the workers, without putting a stop to capitalist robbery is discussed in all seriousness. This absurdity is discussed with particular seriousness because of the fact that Maxton and Co. caught hold of it during the period of parliamentary elections, and it is put into the field for catching the votes of the thick-headed petit-bourgeoisie.

The Liberals freed themselves of the project on a pretext. But the independents appropriated it. For, all this is "Socialism in our Time" in a jester's hat, and with a policeman's truncheon hidden in the back pocket.

"Left" social-fascism adorns itself in the finery of bankrupt bourgeois liberalism, because its servile position deprives it of the capacity of thinking otherwise than by prostrating itself before capitalism.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that the "left" social-fascists have not got their own line, their own support. Look at Cook. Yesterday he stated that the way out of world crisis could only be attained by unity with the chief plotter for the fascising of England, Mond ; yesterday at the International Conference in Geneva, he attacked the demand for the decrease in the working day of the miners, out-doing even the British capitalists. To-day, he already calls the Amsterdam International an international disgrace which hands the workers over to the power of the bourgeoisie. This does not prevent him from servilely apologising half-an-hour later, explaining that he meant not Amsterdam, but Albert Thomas in Geneva, i.e., the International Labour Bureau. Such is his work ! In order to bring the workers under the yoke of "industrial peace" and a killing of rationalisation, it is necessary to keep them off the tracks by loud phrases, behind which one is able to hear the voice of class implacability. Cook's sharp words and gestures cut short with barometric accuracy, every flow of proletarian indignation. In American prisons, the prisoners are pacified by putting the water-hose on them. The water pours into the mouth, nose, ears, knocks them off their feet. It is only ordinary water, but it fulfils its task well, and is capable of subduing most people. Such also is the function of the "lefts."



Maxton, at every attempt of an outbreak on the part of the workers, replies by a parliamentary revolt of the back-benchers in the name of the preservation of pre-arranged harmony in the complicated system of capitalist dictatorship. Cook "in the trade union sphere" meets every move on the part of the workers by gestures of a leader, always prepared "to lead to struggle in order to subordinate the masses. Ramsay MacDonald himself went with the "lefts" during the world war and the post-war years, creating a path for a leap to power of the future English social-fascism. Cook was in Moscow and found

the path from Moscow to Mond, not forgetting to pander to Mondism from time to time with Moscow reminiscences.

Such is the nature of the Cooks and Maxtons !

"Left" social-fascism in England holds a position out of all proportion in the social-arena. It has been placed there by the British bourgeoisie, which has selected it to be its weapon, in order to represent and crush the ever-more revolutionary English working-class "Vertreten und Zeitreten" as Marx once said. "To represent so, in order to more easily crush !

G. SAFAROV.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE LABOUR ARISTOCRACY

By G. SMOLYANSKY.

THE question of the changes in the structure of the working-class after the war, and of the new character of the labour aristocracy is not academic. It is no accident that the Communist Parties and Revolutionary Trade Union Movement in its struggle for a Bolshevik line within the trade unions : in its struggle with open-Right and "Left" opportunism, has to come into collision with the simplification and glossing over of the question of the role of the labour aristocracy. This takes various forms. If, on the one hand, the Rights, who have a united front with all social-fascism, slanderously portray the Communist Party and the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement as an "organisation of the unemployed," "unorganised" and the "lumpen-proletariat," and in this manner deny completely the importance of labour aristocracy as the social basis of reformism, then, on the other hand, no less harmful attempts are made to make a correct estimation of those structural changes which take place as a result of capitalist rationalisation within the working-class, by portraying these structural changes not as a political split within the working-class during the present period, but as a complete social rebirth of one section of the proletariat into an integral part of the bourgeoisie as a class.

In both cases, we have anti-Marxist, and anti-Leninist tendencies. These tendencies express

themselves in a desire to refute the unity of the working-class, which is broken, thanks to the unequal development of capitalism, and industrial monopoly, and which made possible the buying over of the upper sections of the proletariat. This unity of the working-class was the basis of Marx's teachings on the proletariat. Marx's great historical service was that, working for over forty years in conditions of the industrial monopoly of England, under conditions of the trade union labour aristocracy and rise in wages, he gave an overwhelming picture of the *absolute impoverishment* and *levelling* of the proletariat, its transference into a uniform, disqualified mass.

### "DESTRUCTIVE" CRITICISM OF MARX.

Not for nothing do the bourgeois economists, revisionists, syndicalists and present social-fascist theoreticians continue to submit to "destructive" criticism Marx's theory of impoverishment. Marxism is too abstract and narrow—wrote the bourgeois critics of Marx—Herkner and Zombart. "Within the fourth estate the fifth estate was created." writes the contemporary fascist sociologist, Robert Michels, a one-time social-democrat and syndicalist. That, which Marx writes in the last chapter but one of "Capital," is a social poem—wrote the syndicalist theoretician Sorel—which Marx "usually set going effectively, but his pupils

converted into the abstract doctrine of the classes." This denial of the unity of the working-class was sometimes hidden by extremely radical phrases. Such classical phraseology was introduced in his time in Russia by the unlucky ancestor of unsuccessful Russian syndicalism, Machaisky: "The real proletarian movement would draw in all the tramps who are rejected by the socialists—thrust out, in order to avoid inconvenient rebellious slogans of "bread to the hungry!" The modern Thalheimers and Branderites take the same path of these general attacks on Marx when they slander about "the party of the unorganised" and "unemployed." But there are others, who, if not to the same degree as those comrades who are lovers of "left" phrases, fall into the same "opposition" to Marx when they, as for instance, Comrade Merker, portray the labour aristocracy as an organic part of the *bourgeois class*, or as Comrade Merker wrote in his article "The struggle against fascism": "*The financial oligarchy and its bribed upper strata of labour aristocracy—such are the decisive class forces of the bourgeoisie in the monopoly-imperialist industrial state.*"

#### THE STRUGGLE OF THE R.I.L.U.

Over a period of ten years the Red International of Labour Unions (Profintern) struggles for a bolshevik line in the Trade Union Movement. For a period of ten years the Profintern mercilessly exposes the treacherous role of reformism and social-fascism, proving their roots to lie in the labour aristocracy. And for a period of ten years it has fought and is still fighting against those who, expressing oneself in the affected language of the modern Thalheimer are the "sub-section of the labour aristocracy," and also against those, who desirous of *artificially making lighter* the task of struggle with social-fascism, *vulgarise the problem*, attributing *all* the organised and skilled proletariat to the ranks of the labour aristocracy, and transforming all the labour aristocracy into an organic part of the "bourgeoisie, as a class."

That is why the raising of the problem of the labour aristocracy is more than real in our time, despite its long standing. "Theory is grey," said the old man Goethe—"and eternally green is the tree of life." Those tremendous structural changes in the working-class, which have

brought forth new forms of labour, created by present capitalist rationalisation, give still more inexhaustible material for confirmation of that final picture, which was drawn by the hands of genius of the author of "Capital."

#### EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTHS AND WOMEN.

Labour aristocracy is that section of the working-class, which, thanks to its particular position in production and thanks to the particular situation of capitalism in its country, can at the expense of the whole of the working-class of the country, or at the expense of colonial and all other super-profits, win for itself a favourable position. This nature of labour aristocracy was and is unchanged. But since the war, the possibilities of the bourgeoisie being able especially to favour such a large number of the upper strata of the proletariat, as in the period of the upward curve of capitalism, have altered, and secondly, as a result of the introduction of automatic machinery, the forms of "special position in production" of various strata of the proletariat have radically changed. Automatic machinery opened the gates of the factories and workshops to a huge number of unskilled workers, women and youths. The basic type, under conditions of modern rationalised factories, is the so-called "*learner*." In the opinion of the bourgeois author of an interesting book on rationalisation in the U.S.A., Arthur Pounds (the Iron Man), 70 per cent. of the workers learn the processes of production in three days. Skilled manual labour power is gradually being wiped out of industry, the worker-specialist is being de-classed, and the worker is no longer the *spiritus rector* (driving spirit) of the machine, but merely its supplement; as a result of the conveyor, etc., the processes of labour are becoming "deprived of a soul," and also labour power is prematurely exhausted as a result of the increase in the rate of labour.

Unfortunately, we are not in possession of accurate statistic data as to the correlation of skilled and non-skilled labour power in the post-war years. Neither reformist, nor bourgeois statisticians give this information. But, nevertheless, on the basis of a whole number of indirect entries, it is possible to judge correctly not only the qualitative proportions of the structural changes in the working-class, but also



of its quantitative character. We will endeavour by taking a number of examples, to study this data in the following directions :

- (a) The progress of loss of independence of the working-class.
- (b) The growth of unskilled labour, and women labour, and labour of youth.
- (c) Changes in correlation between employees and workers.
- (d) Changes in fluctuation of labour.
- (e) The qualitative changes in the sphere of payment of labour.
- (f) The relations between capitalist rationalisation with the policy of "peace in industry."

#### "THE WAR MACHINE."

Capitalist rationalisation does not only affect the organisation of methods of labour. Rationalisation has basically altered the structure of economy as a whole, embracing sale, distribution, credit system, service and all other forms of production. This huge concentration of industry, has caused a growing loss of independence of the masses. In this connection an extraordinarily clear picture is afforded by the population census of Germany in 1925, as compared with that of 1907. During this period the number of independent persons in the country increased by 0.9 per cent., although quantitatively the number of independently engaged men grew by 23.3 per cent., and the women almost by 35 per cent. Nearly *all the current* of independently engaged persons were comprised of those who were economically dependent. At the present moment in Germany the number of independent persons comprise only 17.3 per cent. of the whole of the independently engaged population. Of the number of dependent people, workers comprise 45.1 per cent.

But the greatest changes took place within the ranks of the working-class. German statistics show that the number of unskilled workers and learners comprised 55 per cent. in 1925. Without a doubt, from that period, the percentage of unskilled labour considerably increased. A quick process of transference of skilled workers to unskilled labour is taking place, insofar as the skilled workman, as such, is unable to find work. If rationalisation was previously based on the study of every small detail in the process of

labour and the task of the foreman was confined to placing "the suitable person on a suitable job," now, in connection with the present introduction of automatic machinery the high qualifications of the worker-specialist often interferes with him. In the modern rationalised factories the *physical defects* of the worker are sometimes at a premium. A rationalised factory is "the friend of the cheated souls," writes the German economist, Christian Schmidt, in his book "Man and Machine." This was reflected in the tremendous growth in women's labour and the labour of youth. "Practice has shown," writes Pound, "that workers of 18 to 25 years are better able to endure the strain of the "iron machine." The French Minister of Labour officially declared in the Chamber of Deputies, that the number of women in industry is in that country from 40 to 45 per cent. In Germany, out of 3½ million employees over one-third are women. The questionnaires of various trade unions supply very clear facts. The Central Committee of the Christian Union of Leather Workers in Germany produce the following characteristic questionnaire. In 1929 the number of male workers in the leather industry, in comparison with 1913, was less by 60 to 70 per cent., the number of women, more by 418.1 per cent., and the number of learners more by 82.9 per cent. The organ of the English Ministry of Labour, "Ministry of Labour Gazette," also publishes some indicative facts (especially, if we take into consideration that in England we have the primitive process of rationalisation) (a) in the engine-building trade in 1929 the number of male workers were 539.3 thousand, and the women 47.4 thousand, the corresponding figures for 1924 were 588.5 thousands and 38.9 thousands (b) in tailoring, in 1929 the number of male workers were 195.7 thousand, and women 385.6 thousand, the corresponding figure for 1924 202.3 thousand and 371.4 thousand.

A change has taken place in the relations of the workers and employees. Thanks to the introduction of automatic processes of labour the percentage of employees engaged in industry has increased considerably, and at the same time, within the ranks of the employees the percentage of unskilled and learners has also increased. A distinctive feature of the present capitalist rationalisation is the fact that in taking away the

essential functions of production for the workers and transferring them to the machines, it concentrates all the more the skilled functions of organisation and direction. And, not by accident, at the last Congress of the Union of German Employees A.F.A., in 1928, the reporter Otto Luer stated: "Employees play a greater role there, where technical development has gone further than elsewhere." In 1907, for every eleven workers in Germany there was only one employee, in 1925 there was already one employee to six workers and in the chemical, gas and electrical industries one to every four.

In connection with the employees and clerks, it is necessary to point especially to those great changes which this strata have been subjected to since the imperialist war, and as a result of inflation, high prices and the general pauperisation of the petty-bourgeoisie. This has found its reflection in the extraordinary flow of employees into the unions. It suffices only to point to the impressive strength of the German Trade Union Movement of A.F.A., and the Union of German Clerks. In some countries, such as, for instance, Switzerland, the organisation of the employees, clerks and workers of social enterprises form no less than 50 per cent. of the masses organised in the trade unions—while at the same time in Switzerland, these elements comprise no more than 22 per cent. of all the members of trade unions.

It is quite natural that the introduction of the automatic processes of labour could not but produce deep changes in the system of payment of labour. The economic position of the workers becomes more and more alike than ever before. In so far as the labour processes are "soulless," in so far as conveyor and generally automatic processes of labour deprive the skilled worker of his "craft" face, so there is a process of levelling of wages of the mass of the workers, who stand at the conveyor—independent in *whatever kind of industry*. The modern learner can work during the year in the most varied rationalised enterprises. "The present existing differentiation within the professions," writes the American statistician, Lloyd, "has almost ceased to exist and with its disappearance the difference in the payment of similar conditions lessens." The main task of the foreman in a rationalised factory is the correct functioning of the conveyor and the corresponding selection

of the labour mass. In this connection the famous leather works of Bati—the Czecho-Slovakian "Ford," present an interesting picture. In the works of Bati 12,000 workers are employed. This is how the special questionnaire of International Labour Bureau describes the wage system of these "model" rationalised enterprises. Up to 1923 in the workshops of Bati there existed five categories of wages: skilled workers—450 crowns, unskilled workers—360, skilled women workers—240 crowns, unskilled women workers—130 crowns. From 1928 this system changes. Four categories are created: workers over 21 years—45 per cent.—480 crowns, workers under 21—16 per cent.—210 crowns, women workers over 18 years—26 per cent.—240 crowns, women workers under 18 years—13 per cent.—150 crowns. Payment is made according to age, i.e., in relation to *physical endurance*. The conveyor demands *physical selection*. This is not possible at once, of course. When the conveyor was first introduced at Bati's, the productivity of labour fell by 50 per cent., and then increased three times.

This data of payment of labour at Bati's reflects, as in a mirror, the picture of structural changes in the proletariat after the war. We have here more than one-third female labour; and it is characteristic that women of the age of 18 to 21 receive more than youths of the same age. The number of working youth generally comprises a little less than one-third. The "age census" of the remainder of the workers is not particularly high. All this shows clearly the role played by the unskilled worker in modern rationalised factories.

This does *not* mean, of course, that the labour aristocracy, as such, *disappears*. Its basis, undoubtedly, has considerably narrowed. The *subject* of the labour aristocracy alters. Instead of the highly-skilled worker of the past, their place is taken by those elements who are more highly paid, "pace makers", who give the tempo to the conveyor. These elements stand even closer to the employer than the former, highly-skilled trade union aristocracy. To them is foreign, not only the general class consciousness, of which the trade union labour aristocracy was also deprived, but also the feeling of "craft" solidarity, which was extremely well developed in the latter.

It is not for nothing that many of the bour-



geois lookers-on become frightened by this levelling of the "iron man", the working masses at the conveyor. "The automatic machine with its tendency to simplification and equalising," writes Pound, "can lead to true democracy, as well as to new slavery, and it can also push the world into *anarchic chaos*."

Finally, it is necessary to remark on the momentous importance which present capitalist rationalisation and new methods of labour have in the task of fastening the workers to the factory and the "organisation of industrial peace."

It has become easier for the employer to manoeuvre, in view of the fact that the percentage of skilled labour in the rationalised enterprises has decreased. It is well known that Ford and a number of other American employers adopt the system of periodic mechanical change of workers. On the other hand, the overwhelming mass of workers, who are now without any special qualification, find themselves firmly attached to the factories despite the fact that the deadly monotony of automatic labour should inevitably lead them to change their work. In this respect American data presents a surprising picture. In the Employers' Year Book of the U.S.A. for 1926, we find the following picture: average yearly change of work—arising only out of voluntary departures on the part of the workers—in factories embracing 300,000 workers in March, 1920—161 per cent., in February, 1923—97 per cent., August, 1926—only 41 per cent. The main reason for this, according to the admission of the substitute director of the International Labour Bureau, Bootler, being the "organisation of conditions of labour on a scientific basis" and "the introduction of workers' representation for the purpose of maintaining good relations between the workers and employers."

Unfortunately, up to the present, the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, has paid very little attention to this last-mentioned factor of present capitalist rationalisation, and its significance as a weapon of "industrial peace." Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie reiterates this daily. At the Congress of "Scientific Organisation of Labour" which took place last year, the present French Premier, Tardieu, and the Chairman of the American Federation of Labour—Green, both underlined the fact that "rationalisation

should be, at one and the same time, the efforts of an economic character, and the efforts of social solidarity." The role played by the famous Mond Chemical Combine with the English trade unions in the organisation of "industrial peace" is well known.

The "industrial peace" agreement which exists in the Mond enterprises includes "factory representation," share in profits, etc. The slogan of "to the masses" is one of the dominating cries of monopoly capital. Having lost its previous stronghold within the working-class, monopoly capital endeavours at all costs to strengthen itself by other means among the proletariat. This is precisely the historic meaning of the social demagogy of national-fascism in the hastening of the rate of fascisation of social-democracy. Capitalist rationalisation calls forth spontaneous protests from the working masses. And monopoly capital has proclaimed a crusade against the "soul" of the worker. In this connection, in a special statement to the workers the following was said: "We allow you a share in the profits not because we feel the need to divide money amongst people, but simply out of a feeling of kindness. *By this means we hope to be able to lower the cost of production still more.*"

This fight for the workers' "soul" has taken particularly clear forms in Germany. A special institute called "Dint" was set up in Dusseldorf for an "educational" purpose. Cadres of the most loyal and skilled workers were to be educated there. The purpose of this education, according to the statement of the founder and leader of the "Dint," Arnold, an engineer, "is intelligent obedience and joy in work."

Such types of "factory schools" are now founded at the large rationalised factories. At Bati's, for instance, 900 adolescents are specially trained in an "internat" organised by the employers, and their lives are conducted along strictly conducted lines set down by their employers. These young people should afterwards comprise the upper strata of the more reliable section of workers and employees of that factory.

In this fashion, the old type of labour aristocracy becomes a thing of the past. The old type of aristocratic office bookkeeper and factory aristocratic mechanic, dies out, and the places are taken by a smaller number of workers, but

even more "narrow, self-loving, unfeeling, covetous, petty-bourgeois, imperialistically inclined, bought over and corrupted by imperialism, labour aristocracy (Lenin).

#### CHANGE OF TACTICS.

What significance do all these changes in the social structure of the proletariat have upon the tactics of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement? The labour aristocracy was the basis of the bloom of English trade unionism in the epoch of English industrial monopoly. With the development of imperialism during the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, the position changed only in the sense that "monopoly is made use of by financial capital of *not* one, but several, large powers." "Then, it was possible to buy over the working-class of one country, and corrupt it for a decade. Now, this is inconceivable, probably even impossible, but, for all that, every imperialist "great" Power is able to buy over and does buy over, *less* (than in England in 1848-68) strata of "labour aristocracy" . . . The economic basis of "social chauvinism" and opportunism is one and the same; the union of a meagre section of the "upper strata" of the labour movement with "its" national bourgeoisie against the masses of the proletariat. (Lenin: "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International.")

Already, long before the war, social-democracy and the reformist trade union movement separated the working-class and its *upper section*. By working-class was meant only the *organised* and skilled section of the proletariat. It is characteristic, that even in 1892, at the Berlin Congress of German social-democracy, Wilhelm Liebknecht, turning to his audience, said, "You, who are present here, are also partly aristocrats amongst the workers. The labouring masses of the Saxony mining region, the weavers of Silesia, would consider your wages to be princely." On the eve of the war social-democracy could count 80 per cent. of skilled workers, 10 per cent. unskilled, and 10 per cent. "others." It is quite natural that this privileged section of the proletariat, as also its political party and trade union organisation, could not but be infected with social-chauvinism, social-imperialism, with the ideology of "peaceful ingrowing into the capitalist state," "industrial peace" and "economic democracy." This was

pointed out by the Second Congress of the Communist International, where for the first time the problem of the trade union movement was taken up.

"For these same reasons, thanks to which, with few exceptions, international social-democracy found itself to be, not the weapon of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalism, but an organisation holding back the working-class from revolution in the interests of the bourgeoisie; the trade unions in the majority of cases were during the war a part of the war apparatus of the bourgeoisie. . . . *The trade unions who, in the main, embraced the skilled, better-paid workers, limited by their craft narrowness, fettered by the bureaucratic apparatus divorced from the masses, corrupted by their trade union leaders, betrayed not only the social-revolution, but the struggle for bettering the living conditions of the workers organised by them.*" (Resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International on "The trade union movement, factory committees and the Third International.)

More than this: when the tremendous revolutionary upsurge commenced and in the west there appeared a mass Communist movement, social-democracy immediately proceeded to brand the revolutionary workers as "de-classed" lumpen. Large masses of unskilled and hitherto unorganised workers poured into the trade unions. 1920 was the year of the highest numerical development of the trade unions after the war. The spontaneous strike wave broke all the legal ramifications of the trade unions. The trade union bureaucracy equipped itself in particular against the so-called "savage" strike movement, in which, in the main, participated new sections of the trade unions and unorganised workers. In 1922, during the famous "savage" strike of municipal workers in Berlin, the central organ of the A.D.G.B. "Korrespondenzblatt" writes: "It is worth while checking the war documents of the leaders of the factory committees . . . . For only in the trenches could such cruelty be developed, with which a group of workers here treated the populace of a huge industrial town of Germany." Social-democratic theoreticians and the trade union bureaucracy even attempted to portray the whole struggle between the Communists and the social-democrats as a



struggle between the skilled and unskilled workers. (In relation to this see the interesting book of Kurt Geyer, "Radicalism in the German working-class movement.")

After the war, social-democracy underwent great structural changes. Large groups of employees, clerks and petty-bourgeois elements, entered its ranks. But most important is the influence which these structural changes within the proletariat, has upon the *working-class* basis of social-democracy. In view of the fact that as a result of capitalist rationalisation of the last four years, the basis of labour aristocracy has considerably narrowed, and in view of the fact that capitalism is able to buy over only a smaller section of the upper strata of the workers, we see, particularly in the last period, that a considerable number of the working masses leave the ranks of social-democracy. This is proved by the inner-party polemic which developed this year, between the official theoretical organ of the social-democrats "Gesellschaft," and the theoretical organ of the "left" social-democrats "Klassen-Kampf." In a polemical article in the January 1930 number of "Klassenkampf," a certain "left" social-democrat, Helmut Wagner, asks a characteristic question:

"Why was the party (social-democratic,—G.S.) under the present unheard-of attack of capital on all fronts, and in the face of the speedily developing sharpening class contradictions, unable to make use of the growing exasperation of the workers? Why has it been unable to deal a smashing blow neither to the centre nor to the senseless policy of the German Communist Party? Why, up to the present, despite unrivalled favourable political conditions of a Labour Party, *nothing remains of the Party of the German working-class*? (Article on "The Present-Day Psychological Situation.)

If we throw off the "radical" verbal shell of a "left" social-fascist, if we put on one side the verbiage of social-democracy, as of a "labour party" which it has long ceased to be, then we can admit that the statement of the social-democratic organ that the German social-democratic party is *not* a "party of the working-class" is extremely valuable.

It is quite to be understood that this ideology of the labour aristocracy which dominates the Second International should have influenced

certain sections in the ranks of the Communist Parties. These, in an overwhelming majority, have come from social-democracy, and still more is this true of many leading groups of the revolutionary trade union movement. The old traditions and superstitions, the aristocratic pride towards unorganised and unskilled workers stood and still stand in the way of the Bolshevisation of the Communist Parties and Revolutionary Trade Union Movement.

This was foreseen by Lenin when at the Second Congress of the Comintern in his speech on the Thesis on the question of Basic Tasks of the Communist International, he stated: "We have in America, England, and France immeasurably stronger obstinacy on the part of opportunist leaders, the upper strata of the working-class and the aristocracy of labour: they show greater opposition to the Communist movement. *And, therefore, we must be prepared to find that the liberation of the European and American Parties from this illness, will proceed with more difficulty, than with us.*"

And, in reality, we find that the "first recruitment of opportunists and renegades," headed by Paul Levi, accused the Communist Parties of "staking on the lumpen-proletariat." The revolutionary tactics of the spartacists and the German Communist Party was attached, as being a tactic dictated by the lumpen-proletariat who fill the ranks of the C.P. The unemployed movement was also included in this movement of the lumpen-proletariat. Repeating almost fully the bitter lies by the trade union bureaucrats of the participants of the "savage" strikes, Paul Levi wrote in International No. 26 in 1921: "As in every revolution and particularly in revolutions resulting directly after a war, which brought out complete *wildness* of large masses of people and the demoralisation of large sections, there entered into the revolution a special factor, the lumpen-proletariat. We do not see in the lumpen-proletariat a part of the working-class. But it has repeatedly called itself spartacist *and this forces us to think things over.*"

This scorn of the lumpen-proletariat, by which actually is meant the unorganised and unemployed workers, was the direct expression of the ideology of the labour aristocracy. And this same ideology was the basis of the slanderous campaign conducted by Brandler and

Wolchar against the C.P., just as when the German C.P., during the Ruhr lockout took the correct and decisive cause for embracing the unorganised and winning over the gigantic factories, where masses of unskilled workers are concentrated. It is worth while now to remember the renowned "argumentation" of the rights (and conciliators) during the Ruhr lockout to the effect that the Communist Party "was unable to attain *direct* successes in economic struggles." For Brandler and Wolchar, it was, of course, unimportant, that the German Communist Party was able to bring into existence a tremendous agitation amongst the unorganised and unskilled masses. Their attention was *only* fixed on the *upper* strata of the organised and skilled sections of the working-class. This was a typical attitude of the labour aristocracy. And it is no accident that the theoretician of the German Rights, Doctor Thalheimer, in his bulky additions covering 100 and more pages to the programme of the C.I. during the Sixth World Congress, *does not mention even the labour aristocracy once*. This showed a theoretical non-Leninist, *old-centrist understanding of imperialism*, which, according to Lenin, feeds the labour aristocracy and by the same token, reformism.

It is necessary to state quite openly that, up to the present, our Revolutionary Trade Union Organisations suffer, to a large degree, from these traditions inherited from social-democracy. In Europe, the Profintern has two large mass organisations: the Unitarian Confederation of Labour in France and the Red Trade Unions in Czecho-Slovakia. What is the social structure of these organisations? We are not in possession of exact statistical data in this connection, but there is no doubt, that in both organisations the percentage of unskilled workers is *negligible*. It is sufficient to point to the fact, that out of the 400,000 and more members of U.C.L. the number of purely industrial workers comprise only an insignificant part, and the number of foreign worker-emigrants does not exceed 20,000 to 25,000. At the same time, the foreign workers, in an overwhelming majority unskilled, comprise a formidable strength in the French working-class—over one-third in the mining industry, nearly one-half in the metal industry, not less than 60 per cent. in the chemical industry, and so on. The facts in

relation to the leadership of the economic struggles show clearly how great is the pressure of the ideology of the labour aristocracy in the Unitarian Confederation of Labour. Only at the end of last year, during the most important strike in France in 1929—in Belfor, where nearly 12,000 metal workers and textile workers struck, and where the leadership of the strike was directly that of the Communist Party (which undoubtedly speaks of the *higher level* of the present workers movement in France), unskilled workers were not elected on to the strike committee. In the summer of 1928 the Unitarian Federation of Metal-workers, calling their members to economic struggle, put forward demands which were only in the interests of the skilled sections of the metal workers.

The same applies to Czecho-Slovakia. According to statistical research into the Red Metal Workers' Union (after Heiss's departure!) at the beginning of 1930 highly skilled workers comprised 20 per cent. of the membership, skilled workers 50 per cent. and only 30 per cent. unskilled. The revolutionary conference of the Skoda Factories held recently showed almost the same picture. In Pilsen, for instance, where 18,000 workers are employed at Skoda's, the number of skilled workers are 50 per cent., and amongst the members of the Red Union in that factory, 400 persons, nearly 70 per cent., are skilled workers, that is, considerably more than half.

There is no necessity to dwell on the fact that Heiss and his group of renegades were representative of the most inferior labour aristocracy.

Over the ten years of its existence, the Profintern conducted a merciless struggle with these agents of labour aristocracy in the ranks of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. In 1921, Paul Levi combined his exposure of the "lumpen-proletarian" character of the structure of the German C.P. with an attack on the Profintern, endeavouring to liquidate the Profintern, as an organisation. The German C.P. and the Comintern liquidated Paul Levi as a member of the Communist Party. In 1928-29 the attack of the Rights in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia was directed mainly against the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. The Profintern had to withstand during these last two years, a greater attack on the part of the right renegades in America, headed by Love-



stone and Pepper, who naturally out of their theory of "exclusiveness" of American capitalism, produce the theory of "mass labour aristocracy" in that country.

But in this struggle with the remnants of the ideology of the labour aristocracy in the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, the Profintern came up against another danger—the danger of sectarian *simplification* and *vulgarisation* of the problem.

What are these "left" tendencies composed of? We have already spoken of the utterances of Comrade Merker, who considers the labour aristocracy to be not only politically, but socially an organic part of the bourgeoisie, as a class. More than this, he includes in the category of labour aristocracy all members of reformist trade unions. *Every social-democrat worker is*, for Comrade Merker, a "*little Zorgibel*." But Comrade Merker is *not* alone in this. Along the whole history of the Profintern we find attempts to *substitute* the difficult task of Bolshevik penetration into the masses (*Bolsheviks—are mass workers*, said Lenin), and the winning over of the majority of the working-class, including workers who are members of social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions by a *sectarian avoidance* of this task, "radical" phraseology about "mass labour aristocracy" and "total complete reactionary masses" in the reformist trade unions and social democratic parties.

The reasonings of these comrades are extremely "simple." Generally speaking their "scheme" resolves itself down to the following: (a) by labour aristocracy—they say—we always, understood the *better-paid* section of the workers, and the *better-paid* section of the workers—are the *skilled* workers; (b) *Organised* workers—are skilled workers, and skilled workers are the labour aristocracy; (c) The workers who are organised into the reformist trade unions and social-democratic party are "complete reactionary masses." There is *no* difference between the *reformist trade union apparatus* and the *bourgeois state apparatus*. There is no social difference between the labour aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, as a class. It is the social-democratic worker who "comprises the basis of social-fascism." It is the labour aristocracy who are the "decisive class force of the bourgeoisie."

The First Congress of the Profintern most decisively resisted these tendencies, which were then represented by the syndicalists. The representative of the syndicalist General Workers' Union of Germany, Greyliig, quoting the well-known theoretician of the "Dutch" school, Hortha, argued the "native reactionary character" of the proletariat organised in the trade unions, in the following manner:

"The overwhelming section of the proletariat, thanks to its class position, sharply feels the need for bettering its position, by reforms, and defence against the worsening of its living conditions. Its life is so hard, that it always, and during a revolution, will strive and struggle for this. From time to time it is prepared to suspend revolutionary struggle, because of these interests. It will make its industrial organisation, its union, act in this fashion. Opportunism and reformism threaten, therefore, the industrial organisations, and the proletariat organised within them."

The natural conclusion to be drawn from this was the *denial of the necessity for work in the reformist trade unions*, which served only the interests of the labour aristocracy. And we see how, before this, at the Second Congress of the C.I., the English, headed by Gallacher, and the American delegation, took up precisely this position. The "logical" development of this "to the end" position caused the Italian delegate Bombacchi at the Second Congress of the C.I., to deny the importance of partial struggles generally, and in the same way, of trade unions. It is necessary to remark, that the logical outcome of the speech of the syndicalist, Greyliig, at the First Congress of the Profintern, had to lead to the same practical results.

This was when the Profintern was in its infancy. And now? After ten years of struggle and experience of the revolutionary trade union movement we have a relapse to these sectarian-syndicalist frames of mind. This is not an accident of course. These moods are conditioned by those *difficulties* which the *Communist Parties and Revolutionary Trade Union Movement face at the present stage of the upsurge of the revolutionary labour movement*. Despite the open *merging* of the reformist trade union bureaucracy with monopoly capital, innumerable workers still continue to

follow the reformist trade union bureaucracy. And, instead of, decisively in a Bolshevik fashion, throwing all our forces into the fulfilment of the difficult tasks of the present period, which were formulated by the Enlarged Presidium of the E.C.C.I. held in February—the organisation of the masses in this period, many comrades take the line of least resistance—justifying their passivity by saying that there is no difference in the “big” and “little” Zörgibels. It is not surprising, therefore, that Comrade Sterker, portraying the fascisation of social-democracy and the reformist trade unions as a *completed* process, transfers the labour aristocracy to being socially a part of the bourgeoisie, as a class. The Political Bureau of the German C.P. in its resolution on the Merker Group quite correctly states that :

“The point of view of the Merker Group forms in its entirety an ideological platform for the “left” in words and the Right in practical politics, opposed to Leninism. The platform of this group is Brandlerism turned upside-down. The roots of this non-socialistic, non-proletarian ideology are to be found in an insufficient faith in the strength of the working-class, and a lack of belief in the capability of the Communist Party to win over the majority of the workers, including the social-democratic workers. . . . Comrade Merker, by ignoring the rank and file social-democratic workers, hides the difference between the social-democratic leaders of the masses, and in this manner the reactionary role of the social-fascist leadership.”

Is it necessary to add, that neither Marx, nor Engels, nor Lenin, looked upon the skilled, and generally speaking the upper strata of the proletariat as a socially inalienable part of the bourgeoisie, as a class? In a well-known letter to Marx, of 7th October, 1858, Engels wrote that in England “alongside of the bourgeoisie” will appear “bourgeois aristocracy” and “*bourgeois proletariat*.” Lenin spoke of the “*union* of an insignificant section of the ‘upper strata’ of the labour movement with ‘its’ national bourgeois against the masses of the proletariat.” As a result of capitalist rationalisation this section of the “upper strata” has grown still *less*; more close to the employer, more corrupt. But this

does not mean that this section of the labour aristocracy comprises an organic part of the bourgeoisie, as a class. And still less does it mean, that the *whole* of the skilled section of the proletariat, the number of which is still considerable (since the process of the introduction of automatic labour is still far from complete) belongs to the labour aristocracy.

At the same time, this contemptuous, haughty attitude towards the skilled workers is becoming an international phenomena in the ranks of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. It is sufficient to refer to the last trade union meeting of the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia, where a resolution was adopted, which put before the Red Trade Union the task of . . . “becoming the organisation of the unskilled disqualified workers—workers wives and working youth . . . and the revolutionary section of the skilled worker!” Can one wonder after this that the Czech Red Trade Union, where the traditions of Heiss are still sufficiently deep-rooted, showed an impermissible disregard of the united front from below, and impermissible passivity in a number of economic struggles of the past period? It is only necessary to point to the January strike of glassworkers in the Tep-litsky region!

The same applies to other countries. At the French Commission of the E.C.C.I. in June of this year, Comrades Thores and Barbe recounted in their speeches many instances of neglect of the united front from below on the basis that “social-democratic workers are no better than their social-fascist leaders.”

This is why the problem of the labour aristocracy is *not* an academic question. Social-democratic traditions, the ideology of the labour aristocracy, press hard on the revolutionary Trade Union Movement and particularly on the Revolutionary Trade Union activities.

But the essential condition for overcoming these serious difficulties of the revolutionary Trade Union Movement, is decisive struggle with vulgarised, sectarian-“leftist” simplifications of the problem. Only by struggle on two fronts can the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement become a real gathering of millions of proletarians for the oncoming large class struggles.



## REPORT OF COMRADE ERCOLI TO THE ITALIAN COMMISSION OF THE C.I.

COMRADES, you will remember that a general discussion on the Italian situation, on the position of the Party and the tasks of the Party, took place five months ago at a plenary session of the Praesidium of the C.I. This will make my task easier. I can leave aside certain general considerations, certain problems already settled by the Praesidium as, for instance, on the general outlook of the Italian situation.

The new facts which have occurred during these last months have no influence in the direction of making advisable a revision of the attitude of the Praesidium on these general questions, which remains correct.

I wish to touch on the following points : the state of the Party, its activity since March, 1930, the situation of fascism, the inner Party situation and in particular the struggle against the right opposition.

It is obvious that all these points are closely connected, that they cannot be separated, and I say this to stress the fact that the fourth point—that which refers to the struggle against the opposition, to the manner in which this struggle has developed, is linked in the closest manner to the whole work of the Party. Possibly (and I shall develop this point later on) a Party which had other conditions than ours to work in, a Party which had an easier situation to face, might have managed differently. The line we have followed in the struggle against the opposition has been largely conditioned by the whole work of the Party, by its whole situation ; by the position of the polity, by the difficulty of negotiating a turn in such a situation. The successes obtained cannot be detached from the rest. All is bound together. At least it is our deep conviction, the struggle against the opposition, and the tone and the form of this struggle are closely bound up with all the general work achieved by the Party in this period, a short period, but one in which we have achieved results.

The question set and to which we must answer here, before the C.I. is this : how have we worked for the achievement of the political and organisational turn decided on in February?

The February-March decisions were as follow :—

(1) We recognise in Italy a new situation furnished by a rapid worsening of the economic crisis, by the onset of a general crisis of fascism, by the revolutionary pressure of the masses, which is showing itself.

(2) We recognise that the Party remains behindhand in relation to the situation, even remains behind a portion of the masses which are going ahead.

(3) Consequent necessity for an energetic turn.

(4) Content of the turn : struggle against opportunist tendencies which do not see the need for the turn and which resist its application.

Here in a few words are the content of the February-March decisions.

Does the development of the situation in these three months confirm the correctness of the analysis and the definition of the situation made in February ? The answer we make is as follows : The facts which have occurred during these three to five months confirm completely the correctness of the analysis made by the Praesidium as to the economic crisis, as to the mass movement, as to the general political crisis of fascism.

As to the economic crisis, I shall quote a few facts and I shall draw these facts from the bourgeoisie, to show how the bourgeoisie, the industrialists, judge the economic situation in Italy. I am taking my facts from a report of the Association of Italian Industrialists given at the end of May.

What is the general opinion on the industrial economic situation ? It is as follows :

"There exists an extensive depression in certain branches of industrial activity. Unemployment in spite of the season favouring a diminution of unemployment, has not diminished. Internal trade is depressed, and we do not think that in the existing conditions of world economy any movement and recovery can be expected."

This is the general opinion.

Now let us closely examine industrial activity. It must be said that spring is the season most favourable to industrial revival, especially for industry. The movement of industrial activity, in spite of this favourable situation, is slow.

Many industrialists have had to further reduce the tempo of their activity in the last months. Let us take the chief branches: the steel and heavy industries.

The slowing up in its activity, which started several months ago, has continued. In these last few months, there is a diminution of 39,919 tons in the output of steel. There is a diminution of 10,482 tons in the output of pig-iron. The diminution in the output of steel is 22 per cent. of the total output, that of pig-iron 20 per cent.

In textiles there is no improvement, especially in silk, which is the chief sector.

In the woollen industry, May saw the end of the sales campaign of the winter products, but there is a total of orders inferior to that of last year.

In the centres of the textile industry, for example, at Prato, the situation is rather critical. The cause which the industrialists assign to this crisis is that no exports are possible to India because there is a boycott of Italian goods. But the contrary is the case, there is a boycott of English goods and an increase of French, Italian, etc., exports is noticed.

In the cotton industry there is nothing new, the serious state of affairs continues.

In the leather industry the situation is sluggish. One cannot speak of a revival because the diminution of consumption continues. A good situation is reported in the footwear industry, but with the added statement "The most important factories work an average of six hours a day, i.e., there is a large diminution in working time.

The situation in the marble industry is almost normal. In the sugar industry nothing has changed, the industry is completely trustified, but the lowering of price on the world market is making itself felt and is causing worry to the industrialists.

As to the labour market—unemployment. What was expected was a diminution of unemployment, because especially in agriculture, work is begun in the spring. Yet there is an increase in the official figures of unemployment, both in industry and in agriculture. I give these figures, but they are only indicative figures, because they are official. They correspond in no way to reality. They are figures of the unemployed who are in receipt of relief,

which form only a tiny percentage of the mass of unemployed.

In industry there is an increase of 17,919 unemployed, in agriculture of 97,950.

The greatest contraction is the metallurgical, constructional and electrical industries.

As to bankruptcies, there has been a diminution of the number of bankruptcies during April, i.e., from 1,118 they have been reduced to 974, but in May there has been a renewed increase which brings the number of bankruptcies to 1,121. The figure is higher than that of the previous year for the same month (942).

As to internal trade, the situation continues to be characterised by a remarkable depression; there has been a diminution of 7,641,000,000 in a month, equivalent to a contraction of 255 millions a day.

The loans made by the Bank of Italy have diminished by 1,340,000,000.

The railway traffic has not shown good going. The receipts for April are less than those for March, and show a marked diminution when compared with those of the previous year.

There is also a contraction in harbour traffic. At Genoa, the diminution is 19.60 per cent., at Venice 3.22 per cent., at Trieste 25.10 per cent., at Savona 22.80 per cent., at Livorno (Leghorn) 22.28 per cent., at Fiume 22.50 per cent. There has been an increase in the transport of oranges and lemons.

As to changes in foreign trade, the figures are very interesting. If the figures are examined exteriorly, there is an improvement of 230 millions in value in the balance of trade. But before all else there persists a very heavy deficit, nearly 533.6 millions, and the improvement is the result of the very important diminution of imports as compared with last year. The increase of exports is almost insignificant. The diminution of imports occurs in wheat (the harvest last year was very good, this year it is very bad) and in raw materials; industry is using up its reserves of raw materials but is not importing any more.

As to movements of capital, in May there took place investments totalling 1,200,000,000 and a cancelling of investments of 589,000,000, i.e., a net increase of about 611 millions. But it is furnished for the greater part by over-valuation of existing capital, and new investments are almost exclusively in the electrical industry, and



in the building industry, particularly in house-building ; in Rome, for instance, there is a great plan of public works.

The Stock Exchange has been for the last few months in a constantly depressed condition, There has been a fall in all securities in house property, 9.89 per cent. ; in motors, 8.87 per cent. ; textiles 5.54 per cent. ; metallurgy 3.54 per cent. ; hotel industry 3.81 per cent. ; chemistry 3.14 per cent.

Only banking shares have held good.

As to taxation, there is a marked diminution in the proceeds of direct taxation with an increase in those of indirect taxation.

So the framework of the economic situation, as it is described by the industrialists themselves, is very black, i.e., we find ourselves before a continuous worsening of the general economic situation.

But what is interesting is to examine what the Italian Government has done, in these last few months. It is the most interesting matter to examine, because it leads us to be precise as to what are the lines of resistance of the Italian bourgeoisie and of fascism, and to define exactly what fascism is to-day and does to-day in Italy.

The activity of the State, of fascism, has been from January till to-day an organised, systematic activity for upholding the interests of large-scale industry of the bank, and of bondholders. It is of interest to note what the industrialists have asked of the State during January, February and March, in all the statements of the larger companies, industrial associations and banks. There is a series of demands presented openly, publicly, by the industrialists to the State. These demands constitute the present economic programme of the fascist government. We will give its fundamental lines.

First point : relief to capitalists. It has been obtained by the following steps : lowering of the discount rate—this was the fundamental demand of the industrialists and bankers ; end of the system of control of the foreign exchange—this was one of the things which fascism clung to most, which it held up as one of the marks of fascist economy, as a sort of indirect control of international exchange ; thus, end of the control and freedom of import and export of capital ; increase of State orders for the basic industries—metallurgy, textiles, the steel industry and these are orders directed especially to war industry ;

suspension of public works to devote all resources to the maintenance of industry.

Second point : Relief to property holders. There are two fundamentals : the ending of the system of rent restriction and a new increase of the import tax on wheat, which has reached 50 gold lire and which has an immediate effect on the price of bread and the agricultural markets.

Thirdly : attempts to apply a new plan of rationalisation. These attempts are directed towards industrial and banking concentration and the rationalisation of the whole system of production and distribution. The policy of the banks is shown by the fusion of two of the biggest banks in Italy. Further, new amalgamations of companies, the setting up of great industrial trusts.

But what is of great interest for fascist activity is the attempt at a rationalisation of the distributive apparatus by the setting up of great selling agencies for agricultural produce, in an attempt to eliminate from the market the small and middle retailers and to create a monopoly of the market for these great private selling agencies, which are in the hands of the banks and of the industrial and agricultural organisations.

A very interesting fact in this domain also is what might be called a rationalisation of the system of taxation.

There existed until now in Italy a very complicated system, because besides the State tax there was a series of provincial and municipal taxes, which were a hindrance to the development of internal trade. The demand has been put forward openly by the industrialists, and it was decided to abolish local taxation, to rationalise taxation in the hands of the State, that the whole of taxation be organised by the State with a shift of the weight of taxation towards the great mass of workers and consumers in order to free the producer, the industrialist, the capitalist, the agriculturist. That is precisely the meaning of the whole campaign conducted for the suppression of local taxation. It has been abolished, but the State has substituted for them a series of indirect taxes, which hit the consumer in general, and leave untouched the large-scale producer.

It is evidently a step forward in the direction

of the freeing of industry and capitalist property from hindrances.

Fourthly: measures which are directed against the mass of the working and peasant population. I have already reminded you of the end of the rent restriction system, of the tax on wheat. But the most important event is a new campaign for the lowering of wages. Wages have to-day just been reduced in all industries with the new methods of rationalisation, of eliminating the skilled elements and their replacement by unskilled workers, the discharge of workmen and their re-engagement at lower wages. This is the general case. The wage which was already at a very low level in 1929 has diminished further in all branches of industry and particularly in the countryside (agricultural workers).

Now, something about the mass movement.

I give here a sketch of the principal movements which have taken place in the last months, taking it from an exposition by Comrade Gallo, published in the latest issue of the review of the Party:

"Three days' strike of 10,000 women workers of the textile factory of Varana Barghi, to protest against the forced contributions to the fascist unions.

"Strike at the Silamo factory at Soronno Lombarda to protest against the dismissal of a worker.

"Strike of 3,000 women cotton operatives at Gazzaniga (Bergamo) against a reduction of wages. Red flag on the factory, arrests and lock-out.

"Strike in a button factory at Palazzolo d'Adda. Result in favour of the workers.

"Unemployed demonstration at Cene (Bergamo).

"At Milan demonstration by 500 workers threatened with dismissal at the Whitworth factory.

"At Alessandria, the workers in a factory refuse their pay as a protest against the rationalisation measures.

"At Albona (Istria) refusal of the miners to enter the pits as a protest against the lowering of wages.

"At Parabiago (Milan) demonstration in a factory. Acts of sabotage.

"At Milan, a demonstration of groups of unemployed in the centre of the town.

"At Casorati Primo, demonstration of unemployed against the Podesta.

"At Palazzolo d'Oglio, demonstration of unemployed and women; beat the fascists.

"At Guidizzolo (Modena) demonstration of 300 unemployed.

"At Trieste six terrorist attempts in a few weeks.

"At Piacenza, strike in a button factory against a lowering of wages. Sympathetic strike of all the button workers (women) of the town. Two thousand women on strike for six days. Demonstration before the prisons.

"At Bologna, demonstration of workers in a factory (Parenti) against the application of the minimum wage.

"At Ferrara, 200 workers refuse their pay as a sign of protest.

"At Massa Lombarda the agricultural workers commit a serious act of sabotage in a region of improvements.

"At Reggio Emilia, assault on a lorry loaded with bread, by the unemployed, in the centre of the town.

"At Vignolay, demonstration by 200 unemployed.

"Same at Mirandola, at Pozzuolo, at Massa Lombarda, at Ravenna, at Carpi, at Cadelboscosopra (here attempt to assault the headquarters of the fascists).

"At Cadelboscosopra, assault on the branch of a bank by the peasants.

"At Montevardri, 20 days' strike in the silk factories.

"At Livorno (Leghorn) strike in a glass works. At Empoli, demonstration in a factory. At Livorno, demonstration of 200 unemployed. At Signa, unemployed demonstration.

"At Piglio (Rome), the inhabitants drive out the Podesta. At Guardagrieli (Chieti), violent fight with the fascists, at Faito (Avellino), attempt to set fire to the communal building. At Lecce, the workers invade the communal building. Strike of agricultural workers at Conversano and Barletta.

"At Martina Franca, the inhabitants assault the communal building, and set fire to the fascist headquarters and to the tax office."

As a general conclusion: Is there an arrest in the process of the development of a wave of mass movements? No, there is no such arrest. There is, on the contrary, an intensification of



the number of mass movements, a multiplication of incidents, but the incidents are quite unco-ordinated. There is a complete lack of an organisation, a co-ordination of these movements. In what districts and what classes occur especially these movements? One might say that the class which is in the van to-day is the class of agricultural workers. The greater part of the movements are movements of agricultural workers occurring in Emilia, in the district which is typical of large landownership and of rationalised agriculture.

The character of these movements: they are demonstrations of agricultural workers against wage reductions, against unemployment, demonstrations of two, three or five hundred workers who come together, demonstrate in the streets, go to the fascist headquarters crying: "We want bread and work!" who sing revolutionary songs; they are quite spontaneous strikes, savage, not directed by the Party, which last three, four or five days, but are broken by the lack of mass organisation.

Then there is the peasant movement in the south, which has a different character. We note here two or three incidents. What is the character of the explosion? Very violent, instantaneous, unexpected, which often lasts for a day and in the evening it's all over. The most important incident occurred at Martina Franca. The movement started from the classes of poor and middle peasants in reaction against the measures of repression of local taxation and the introduction of the national tax on wine. The national tax on wine is exacted in a really brutal manner. For instance, the peasant who goes to work in the country receives as the value of his wages a litre or two of wine; he is paid in kind. When he returns to the town in the evening, he has to pay the tax on his bottles of wine. There it was really the explosion of the anger of the whole mass of poor and middle peasants. The rich peasants took no part in the movement, they were indifferent, and they even said that the middle peasants were in a very bad situation. That is to say, that there was a situation where the resistance of the rich peasants was partly neutralised because they too are enduring the consequences of the agricultural crisis.

The fascist militia made common cause with the mass of the population. It was therefore necessary to send sailors with machine-guns and

they succeeded by means of terror in violently repressing the movement.

We have movements of this type in Sicily, in Sardinia, where they are also explosions of anger, of revolt, on the part of the mass of the population of poor and middle peasants, unorganised, undirected by the Party.

It is a very interesting fact that the greater part of these movements both in the north and in the south, place the authorities in a position of very great embarrassment, the fascist authorities do not pass all at once to terror, but attempt to persuade the masses; the podestas, the fascist mayors, go before the workers who are demonstrating and start weeping, saying, "We also are in a bad situation, there is a crisis in the whole world."

In a great proportion of cases concessions are made. Naturally when the movement takes on a strike character and the factory workers take part, repression measures are used at once. For example, at the time of the strike in the button factories at Piacenza, 200 women workers were arrested and some ten of them deported. That is to say that repression begins and becomes strong at once when those forces take part from which fascism has most to fear, the working-class, the class which has traditions of organisation, etc.

STEPANOF: Strikes are considered as crimes against the State.

ERCOLI: That law is no longer applied. Action is taken by administrative means; one is deported on the accusation of being a revolutionary element, but trials of strikers are no longer held.

What is the state of mind which reigns in the masses? In our review of the Party, in the three latest issues, we have started a heading "Letters from the workers of Italy to the Party." I request comrades to read a few of these letters. They show that the state of mind dominant in the masses is this: there can be no further going forward, it must finish, there is then no answer. That is to say, that there is a general state of discontent in the working-class, among the peasantry, among the classes of the petty bourgeoisie, but there is no organisation of this discontent, or an organisation of the movements to which it leads. That is one of the fundamental characteristics of the present situation in Italy, and that is one of the facts that allow the



situation to continue. Fascism has in this situation great possibilities of manœuvring and "continuing."

A few words on the general political situation. Comrades ask me this question: "You are always speaking of a general crisis of the fascist régime, but why doesn't it fall?" I should like to say here a few words on this subject. Our opinion is that there is really a general crisis of fascism. For instance, as to the economic crisis, it would be a mistake to believe that the present economic crisis is only the backwash of the world crisis. It is evident that it is one aspect of it, but the crisis derives also from the Italian situation, and is the consequence of the whole politics of fascism in recent years.

As to the crisis of fascism, as such, we must start from this idea: Fascism to-day is not a party of the Italian bourgeoisie. Fascism to-day is *the* Party of Italian bourgeoisie. Fascism to-day is not a *support* of the State, but *the organisation* of the State. The crisis of fascism is a general crisis of the State and of the organisation of capitalist society in Italy. That is why the crisis is so long in developing, why there are reserves coming into play, because it is not a question of an aspect of Italian capitalism, but of a general crisis of the whole of Italian society as such. And to this point is linked everything that we said in February on the prospects of the revolution, and that there is no other prospect than a fall of fascism through the revolutionary movement.

But the second fact on which we must most insist, is that a system only falls when it is brought down. That is an expression of Lenin's: the capitalist system does not fall, it must be overthrown. And for the fascist system that is even more true; it must be overthrown.

In the present situation, what are the forces which can bring down fascism? The bourgeoisie? No. To-day fascism fulfils the interests of the industrial and agricultural bourgeoisie 100 per cent. It is evident that in a more advanced period of the crisis we shall see signs of panic in the bourgeoisie; but at the present time, the bourgeoisie is resisting and fighting on the plane of fascism.

The petty bourgeoisie? There is no political organisation of the petty bourgeoisie

which is in a position to lead a mass struggle against fascism.

Next the workers and peasants. The movements of the workers, of the peasants, are not co-ordinated, are not organised, and as a result they lack the strength necessary to transform the present situation into a situation of open revolutionary crisis.

The central problem is therefore that of the mass movement. How shall we succeed in this situation in making a breach? How shall we succeed in co-ordinating the movement of the mass? How will the masses succeed in becoming aware of their strength and able to use their strength to open a breach into which will pass the general insurrection of the workers and peasants against fascism? That is why the fundamental problem of the Party is that of its mass activity of the organisation of the movement of the masses.

I wish to say a few words on the social-democrats.

What are the social democrats doing now? The social democrats, I believe, see the problem much as we do, they judge there is a general crisis and that we are getting near an open revolutionary crisis. This situation and this awareness provoke in social democracy a very sharp process of inner differentiation. This problem is the actual process of the fascisation of social democracy. But it is of interest that this fascisation of Italian social democracy is to-day accompanied—and this is what we foresaw in the February discussions—by an inner crisis in social democracy. To-day there is in Italian social democracy, a situation which we might describe as one of scission. Beneath the pressure of events, two tendencies have formed: a tendency which might be called Right, which includes the old reformist cadres, the old leaders, the old "beards" of the socialist, Turatti, Modigliani, etc.; on the other hand there has formed a scission so-called "Left." But we shall see at once which Left is concerned. What is the concept of the Right? Its fundamental thesis is this: fascism can only be eliminated by the bourgeoisie. It is the bourgeoisie which is to set aside fascism and the bourgeoisie will do it within a short period, because the economic crisis will convince the bourgeoisie that it must be done. What are the workers to do? They



must struggle for their immediate interests, for their wages, but they must not struggle for political aims, no political struggle ; one must not speak of the political aims of the workers' movement. The economic pressure of the workers will convince the industrialists that fascism must be got rid of. It is approximately the position of the economists in the first period of development of economism in Russia. The practical result of this position is as follows : a brake on the movement of the masses ; the working masses must interest themselves in their wages, but not indulge in politics. Their political fight against fascism will be undertaken by the bourgeoisie who will become convinced that freedom for the workers is necessary for them to come out of their situation. This position is already a direct help given to fascism.

It is of interest to note that this position is also that of Santini who in his article published in the journal of the C.G.P. also says : "The economic struggle, no political struggle ; the economic strike, no mass political strike. The mass political strike is madness."

What is the position of the so-called "Left" of social democracy ? Why do I say that a "Left" is in question ? Because it *presents itself* as a Left, i.e., it criticises the passivity of the old leaders of social democracy ; it says : "You live abroad, you do nothing in Italy." They criticise the old tactics of social democracy, the tactics of the Aventino ; they repeat the Communist criticism of the Aventino. And they have as fundamental thesis *activism* : something must be done in Italy, one must work in Italy, gestures must be made to call the masses into movement, the slogan of revolt and insurrection must be launched.

Recently you know that an element of this organisation dropped leaflets in Milan from an airplane. What was the slogan contained in these tracts ? "We must make barricades."

That is what allows one to say that this is a leftist tendency, because it goes at once to extreme consequences.

But what is the bottom of its political position ? It is this : fascism must be overthrown by a democratic revolution which will be made by the whole mass of the people for political aims, for liberty. What are the workers to do ? They must stay at home. The economic struggle of the workers, the struggle for wages, disturbs, hinders the revolutionary struggle against fascism. No struggle for wages must be made, because otherwise the industrialists will take fright and ally themselves with the fascists. The workers must fight for liberty in alliance with the bourgeois and the petty bourgeois, but not for wages.

You see therefore, that beneath the mask of Leftness, this tendency takes a most reactionary position and a most dangerous one, a position of the most direct and immediate help to the fascists, a position of the most serious hindrance to the labour movement. It is of interest to note the new "Left" group attacks the Communists the most severely. In a leaflet addressed to the workers they say : "Do not follow the Communists, they are madmen, they break the front of the struggle against fascism : abandon Communism."

I now come to the question, how have we achieved the turn, how have we worked to succeed in beginning at least to bridge the distance which exists between the situation and the Party ? You remember that for the August 1st campaign we distributed altogether 30,000 copies of newspapers, leaflets and stamps. For the 1st of May we distributed 32,000 newspapers and 100,000 leaflets. There is, as you see already, an enormous progress ; there is no possible comparison.

We have made great progress in the publication of leaflets directly by the basic organisations.

But the greatest results have been obtained in the region of organisation in the narrow sense of the word, i.e., in the enlarging and consolidating of our organisation.

(to be continued).